No. 664.) For Week Ending September 21st, 1901. (One Penny.

PEARSON'S

SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE for HOME and TRAIN

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,
Sick Headache, Constipation, Wind and Pains in Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver, and Female Ailments.

SALE OVER SIX MILLION BOXES YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

KAPUTINE

The Best & Safest Remedy for

HEADACHE.

NURSE HILL, of the London Association of Nurses, writes:

"I have seen Kaputine administered to many patients, and can truly say it is a remedy which should have a place in every household."

All Leading Chemists sell KAPUTINE, 1/-. Samples One Penny

If your Chemist has not KAPUTINE send his name and address to KAPUTINE, HUDDERSFIELD, and we will send you a SHILLING PACKET FREE.

WORTH A CROWN A DOSE.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL'S

In Imperial Pint and Quart Bottles.

PURE

Sold by all Grocers and Stores throughout the World.

MALT VINEGAR

2/9 CHALLENGE TO THE WORLD—OUR WARRANTED TIMEKEEPER, 2/9

With a guarantee to keep correct time for three years, will be sent to any address on receipt of P.O. or stamps value 2/9, and three stamps extra for postage. To every purchaser during this month we give with it ABSOLUTELY FREE a strong Mexican SILVER CHAIN. All we ask of you is to show them to your friends, as by doing so you advertise our business.
GENEVA WATCH IMPORTERS, 148 Old Street, London, E.C.
(Please mention paper.)

Old False Teeth Bought.

Many people have old or disused false teeth. Messrs. R. D. & J. B. Fraser Ltd., of Princes Street, Ipswich (established 1833), buy old false teeth. If you send your teeth to them they will remit you by return of post the utmost value; or if preferred, they will make you the best offer, and hold the teeth over for your reply. The largest and oldest buyers of old false teeth in the world.

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK,
Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.

2½% DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS **2½%**
repayable on demand.

The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.

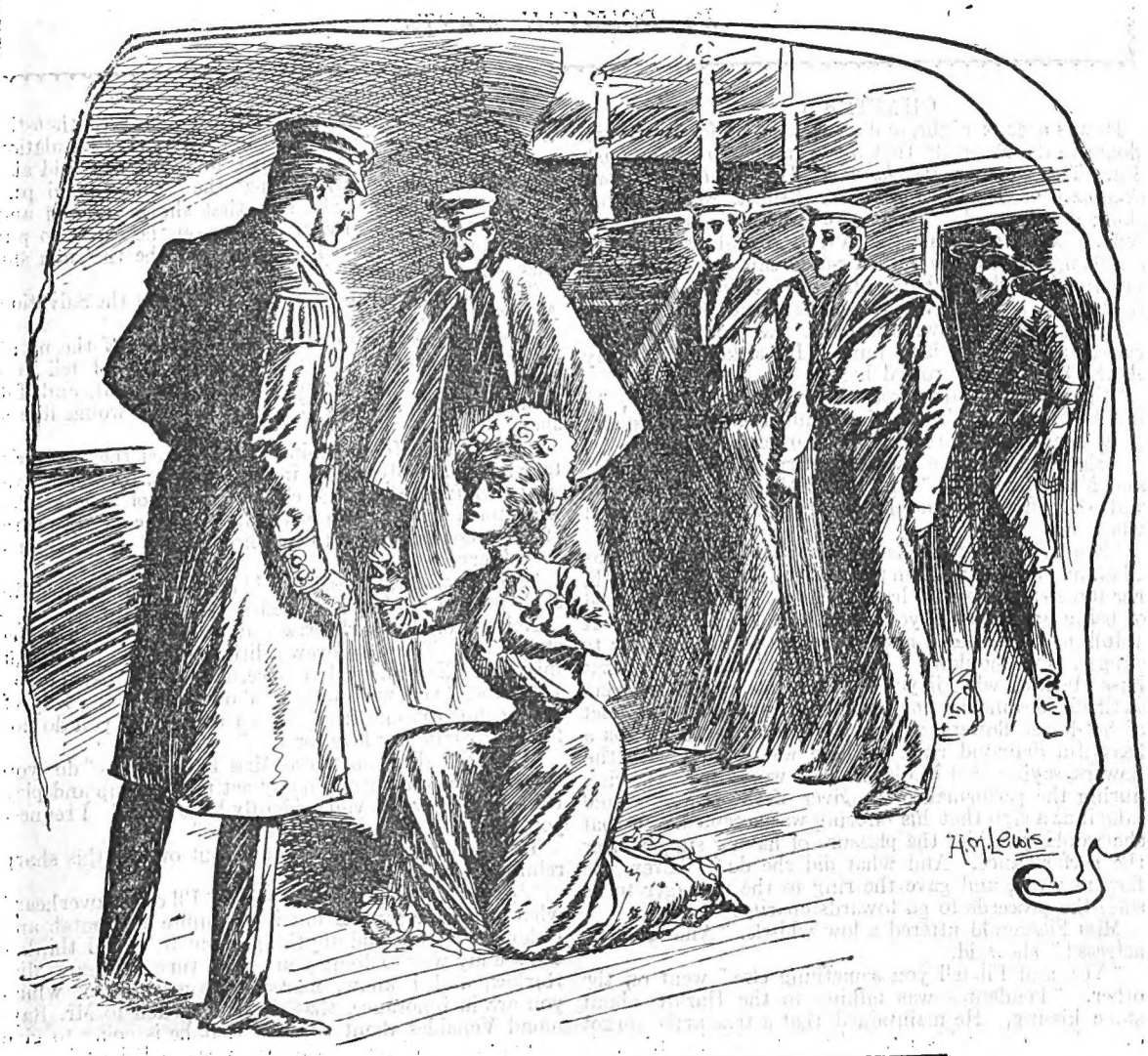
FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager.*

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

SHORT STORIES

No. 634.] For the Week Ending September 21st, 1901. [One Penny.

The Adventures of an Actress.



"Save me, sir, save me," she cried. "Take me away anywhere so long as I escape from him."

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

A THRILLING INSTALMENT.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTRESS.

VII.—At the Mercy of the Ocean.

By DONOVAN MART.

CHAPTER I.

It was a dark night, and a suspicion of fog lent extra gloom to the obscurity that hung pall-like over the Irish Sea. The steamer *Mystic*, with *The Good Samaritan* Company on board *en route* for Belfast, was steaming along at half-speed. There were but a few passengers on deck. Leaning against the taffrail amidships were two female figures, known in their public capacity as actresses as Miss Templeton Fane and Miss Juliet Fitzgerald, the latter a new-comer in the ranks of the company.

"That Miss Harlow," the latter was saying in a low voice, "seems a stuck-up minx. It's sickening the way all the boys dangle round her."

"She's a cat," answered the other vindictively, "I just hate her. She's just like a Sunday-school miss, and gives herself airs as though she were a duchess."

"She seems to have had some stirring times, though," said Miss Fitzgerald, "what with the fire at Newcastle and the adventure at Rugby. I never quite heard what that was."

"Nor I," answered Miss Fane, "but I believe it was all for an 'ad.' And then there's that Mr. Eric Monteith, her tame sheep-dog. I hate him, too. What's the good of being an actress if you can't have a bit of fun? If a Johnny writes me a note and offers to take me out to supper, why shouldn't I have a good time? But, that Miss Harlow, why, if you'll believe me, when we were at Sheffield some lord or other sent her a lovely bouquet of hot-house flowers, and in the middle of them was a beautiful diamond ring. There was a note with the flowers, saying that if Miss Harlow would wear the ring during the performance the giver of the flowers would take it as a sign that his offering was accepted, and that she would give him the pleasure of having supper after the performance. And what did she do? Threw the flowers away, and gave the ring to the manager to be sold, the proceeds to go towards charity."

Miss Fitzgerald uttered a low whistle. "And she's an actress!" she said.

"Yes, and I'll tell you something else," went on the other. "Pendennis was talking to the Harlow about stage kissing. He maintained that a true artist forgot everything except his art, and in stage kissing it didn't matter whether the kiss was real or not. In love scenes, he said, you ought to be consistent, and do just as you would do in real life. Miss Harlow answered that the true actor could not only trust to his powers of simulation to make believe he was in love, but that he could also simulate a kiss so artfully that the sham should pass for the real thing. She said that she never had and never would allow any man, even on the stage, to put his lips to hers unless he happened to be the man she was going to marry."

The other laughed. "She ought to join the Salvation Army," she said.

Miss Fane looked out into the blackness of the night for a few seconds, and then said: "Well, I tell you frankly, I hate her. She's an underhand cat, and if I could only get her out of the company I would like a shot."

A low cough from behind them caused the two girls to wheel suddenly round in some alarm, to find themselves confronted by the cloaked figure of a man who had stolen up to them without their becoming aware of his presence, owing to the throbbing of the steamer's machinery.

"A dirty night, ladies," he said in a pleasant voice. "We shall be late getting into Belfast at this rate."

Neither of the girls saw any reason to answer the statement. The man drew a little closer. "If I'm not mistaken," he said, in a low voice, addressing Miss Templeton Fane, "you were talking about the leading lady of your company, and from what I overheard, you do not feel any particular love for her."

"And if I did," answered Miss Fane hotly, "do you think it is a very gentlemanly act to sneak up and play the eavesdropper as you evidently have done? I request you, sir, to mind your own business."

The man seemed not an atom put out by this sharp rebuke.

"Not so fast, madam," he said. "I'll own I overheard what you were saying, but it was quite accidental, and I shouldn't have said anything about it, only I think I can see my way to doing you a good turn. I know Miss Harlow, and I know, moreover, something of which you are in ignorance, that she has spoken to Mr. Raymond Venables about you and that he is going to give you notice for dismissal after the week at Belfast."

"How do you know that?" muttered the actress quickly.

Digitized by Google

"That's soon told," the man answered, "I was sitting aft, not a quarter of an hour ago, when I suddenly woke up—I suppose I must have dozed off—on hearing voices quite close to me. I was in shadow, and the other three, who were Miss Hazel Harlow, Mr. Eric Monteith, and Mr. Raymond Venables, had no idea of my close proximity. Miss Harlow was speaking; these were her words: 'Not only in my opinion is Miss Fane a poor actress, but she is also a girl who exercises a bad influence over the other ladies of the company. I don't want to be unchar table, but I think she ought to go.' Whereupon Venables answered: 'My dear Miss Harlow, you know perfectly well that your word is law. Miss Fane leaves us after Belfast.'"

It was too dark to see the expression of rage that suddenly transformed Miss Fane's face. "You'll swear that those were her words?" she hissed, forgetful in an instant of her former resentment of the stranger's intrusion.

"Why, certainly," came the calm answer.

"I know why she said it," went on the infuriated actress. "I had a mash note from a Johnny last week and the letter fell into Miss Harlow's hands by mistake. She gave it me and begged me not to go out to supper with strange men. I told her to mind her own business, and now she's taking this dirty, underhand way of getting her own back. What wouldn't I give to be able to pay her out?"

The man seemed to hesitate, then he looked at the other girl. "I take it this lady is a friend of yours, Miss Fane," he said. "I say that, because if you really do want to get even with Miss Harlow, I think I can show you a way to do it that has no danger and that will effectually 'queer her pitch,' if you will pardon the expression."

"Oh, you can trust Julie," answered the girl recklessly; then her voice changed, "I'm not in for murder or anything like that," she said.

The man laughed. "You needn't be afraid of that," he answered easily. "If you give me your word of honour to take what I am going to say in the strictest confidence, I'll tell you a little story that will throw some light on to my proposition."

"Oh, I've said you can trust us," said Miss Fane. "I can keep a secret, and after what you have just told me I am ready for a good deal as long as I can pay Miss Harlow out without any bother."

"Good," answered the stranger. "Then listen to me and I'll throw a little light on to the private life of the good and virtuous Miss Hazel Harlow. I daresay you will have thought it strange that a girl such as she is should have suddenly taken to theatrical life. Some time ago Miss Harlow fell in love, or gave out that she was in love, with a young gentleman named Caldecott. The marriage day was already fixed. Squire Caldecott had got everything in readiness for his beautiful young bride, when suddenly Mr. Eric Monteith appeared upon the scene. Miss Harlow discovered that this gentleman was possessed of a fortune far in excess of Squire Caldecott's. In a moment she put about on a new tack, chucked her first lover, and made the running for all she was worth with Master Eric. But Caldecott was not to be put off so easily. He ran the fair Hazel to earth; and she, determined to win Monteith, induced him to get her, by means of his money, a position in *The Good Samaritan* Company. There they thought she would be safe from Caldecott, and Mr. Monteith was to join the company himself at the first opportunity. Well, it was a pretty scheme, and it's worked out all right. But Miss Harlow is as deep as you make them. She wants to have her fling through the world before settling down in Park Lane or Belgravia as Mrs. Eric Monteith, so she keeps him tied to her apron strings and thinks that she can play fast and loose with her first lover to her heart's content."

Now this story, as those who have followed Hazel Harlow's career will recognise at once, was an absolute misrepresentation of the case. Not only had the villain Caldecott driven Hazel from her home by reason of his unwelcome attentions, but he had also pursued the girl with all the cunning of his black heart, and had only been thwarted by Eric Monteith's devotion and the girl's own steadfast purity and courage, from achieving his base ends.

But Miss Fane, who had already, previous to the meeting with the stranger, conceived a fierce jealousy and hatred for her noble-minded and more beautiful fellow-actress, was ready and indeed willing to believe any vile story that could detract from the blameless character of Hazel Harlow.

"Then if that's the case," she said, "it only strengthens me in my resolve to help you in any way I can to punish Miss Harlow for her duplicity."

"And in helping me to punish her," went on the man, "you will not only pay off old scores, but you will also probably save yourself from dismissal from the company. You will in addition help Mr. Caldecott, who has been so cruelly wronged, to gain the girl who should long ago have been his wife."

"Every word that you say is true," answered Temple ton. "You can speak out quite frankly and tell me how I can help you."

"You must know then," went on the other, "that Mr. Caldecott has determined to accomplish by secret ways that which he cannot do openly. He has determined to spare no expense in the achievement of his object; he wishes to strike when Miss Harlow least expects it, and in the most unexpected way. The day before yesterday he went over to Port St. Mary, which as perhaps you may know, is a seaport at the southern extremity of the Isle of Man. He has there chartered a most compact and seaworthy steam yacht. In a short time we shall be skirting the island. He will have put out in his vessel to effect, with your aid, the capture of Hazel Harlow."

"Is this boat, then, armed with quick-firing guns and torpedoes? Does he mean to blow up the *Mystic*, to be a twentieth century pirate and carry off his lady-love by main force? I don't see what chance he has of success."

The other laughed. "Oh, dear no," he said, "he has a much better plan than that, and one which I have already said, will necessitate your co-operation. And if all goes well I am deputed by Mr. Caldecott to make you a present of something to show you his gratitude and thanks."

"You seem to have laid your plans pretty well," said the girl in an almost awestruck voice.

"They say love will do anything," answered the man with a touch of cynicism, "and I must say that poor Caldecott is about as lovelorn as anyone I have ever seen. There's no accounting for tastes. I don't care for your statuesque, soulless beauties. I like something more piquant and emotional. I can't bear your tall women.

Digitized by Google

Putting all flattery aside, I think it's a good thing for Mr. Caldecott's affections that he never happened to meet with Miss Templeton Fane."

The actress laughed with would-be carelessness, but it was evident that the stranger's subtle flattery had not fallen on barren ground.

"But I'm afraid there is no time to pay compliments," the fellow went on quickly, "though if I only had myself to think of, I'd rather stay here and talk to you than get to business. Now if you will give me your attention for just ten minutes, I'll put you in possession of all the details of our little scheme, after which I don't see why we shouldn't be able to congratulate ourselves in a short time that we've got a dangerous enemy out of your path and made an exceedingly worthy young man the happiest in all Great Britain. You're an actress, Miss Fane, I've watched you with pleasure many times myself; all you've got to do now is to see whether you can act as well off the stage as on. So now let us get to the final details. Come up to the far end of the ship there, where we shall be free from observation, for I don't want Miss Harlow or any of them to see us talking together."

"There's not much fear of that," answered Miss Fane, "Jenny Lovelace, our soubrette, who is as thick as thieves with Miss Harlow, is luckily a terribly bad sailor. Garden, Pendennis, Lindsay, and our other men, are playing nap in the smoking-room, but still, as you say, it is as well to be on the safe side. Come on, Julie, you may just as well be in this business as I, for I daresay, if all goes off well, as this gentleman seems to think it will, Mr. Caldecott will stand you in for something as well as me."

Accordingly the two girls with the stranger discreetly following in their wake, some yards behind them, and walking as though he had no connection with them, so as not to arouse suspicion, passed down the deck of the gently heaving vessel, wet with the autumn fog.

"This fog's a godsend," muttered the man. "I hope it holds till everything's over, it'll add immensely to our chances of success."

CHAPTER II.

JENNY LOVELACE lay prostrate upon her berth. She and Hazel had managed to secure a cabin to themselves. Hazel, although this was the first time that she had ever ventured upon the sea, suffered from no qualms of sickness. Her splendid vitality, fostered by years of country life, had made her immune from all such petty ailments.

"Oh, how bad I feel," moaned Jenny, "I shall look a positive scarecrow when we get to Belfast, and then it'll be a pleasure to feel the solid stage beneath one instead of this horrid insidious rise and fall."

"Poor Jenny," answered Hazel, "I wish I could do something to alleviate your sufferings. Personally I never felt better. Somehow I don't like the idea of climbing on to that narrow shelf they call a bunk. I don't think I shall go to bed. I shall have a good long rest and a bath when we get to Belfast."

At that moment there came a knock at the door. Hazel opened it to find herself confronted by Miss Templeton Fane, on whose face there seemed to be traces of tears.

"Oh, Miss Harlow," said the girl in an almost piteous voice, "I wish you'd come out for a little. I do so want to have a talk with you."

Hazel's surprise may be imagined. Hitherto Miss Fane had always treated her with a certain amount of curtness, mingled with resentment. On the few occasions on which Hazel had tried to make advances to her fellow actress the girl had only repulsed her, and, only a few days ago, when Hazel had tried to dissuade her from accepting the invitation of a strange young gentleman to supper, Miss Fane had broken out into words of anger and defiance. And now had come this sudden change of front. Small wonder at Hazel's mystification.

"I am in trouble, Miss Harlow," went on the actress in a low voice, "I know that I have given you little cause to like me, but I want to ask your advice about a question that has been worrying me for a good many days."

Hazel's warm heart leapt up in pity at the girl's evident distress. Good actress though Hazel was on the stage, yet in private life she was the embodiment of a pure and natural simplicity, and thus she did not, when dealing with others of her own sex, look for duplicity and guile. In this way she laid herself open to the attacks of those whose only weapon was deceit.

"Of course I'll come with you, Miss Fane," she said warmly, "and if I can help you in any way, you know I shall be only too glad to do so. We will let byegones be byegones." Then she turned round to Jenny. "I'm going for a walk on deck with Miss Fane," she said, "try and get some sleep, dear."

Jenny was feeling too ill to make any comment, otherwise it must assuredly have struck the warm-hearted little soubrette as peculiar that Miss Fane should have sought out Hazel's company at so late an hour. And so Hazel, closing the door of the cabin softly behind her, followed the actress down the long passage that led to the stairs that had access to the main deck.

Having reached the deck, Miss Fane led the way past the saloon towards the forward part of the vessel, and finally came to a halt close to where one of the steamer's jolly-boats hung suspended from its davits.

"I think we shall be quiet here," she said, "and I have a good deal I want to say to you. In the first place I want to apologise to you for my rudeness the other day in connection with that going out to supper. It is about that that I want to ask your advice,"—the girl paused.

"You owe me no apology," said Hazel gently. "Everyone has a right to their own opinions. I only told you what I thought about going out to supper with strange men, because one can't help seeing in stage-life what terrible temptations lie in the path of all virtuous women."

"You are quite right," replied the other in a low voice. "I wish I had never gone to supper with that man; there was no actual harm in it, I know, but he is coming over to Belfast. I have promised to see him there and I don't want to. I have fallen in love with him, and he, well, he only cares for me in the same way as a child might care for a new toy. You see how difficult the situation is for me."

The girl was acting as she had never done in all her life before; her voice was full of pathos, low-pitched subdued, tears seemed to be trembling upon her downcast lashes.

Hazel's warm heart leapt up anew; "I am so sorry for you," she said, "of course there's only one course open for you. You must have nothing more to do with him unless you think he intends to marry you."

"But I love him," murmured the girl. It was all that she could do to keep from bursting into a fit of hysterical laughter. Could Hazel have only seen into her soul for one brief instant, she would have realised

You won't forget to get a new reader, will you?

Digitized by Google

the spirit of vindictiveness that had sent her enemy to lure her to disaster.

Yet it must be borne in mind that Miss Fane, eager as she was for revenge on Hazel, really believed that the story told to her a little while ago by the stranger was true. She really believed that Hazel was a hypocrite of the worst description. She had not been used to meet, amid all the thorny paths that run through the stage world, women of the whole-hearted simplicity which was Hazel's. It seemed to her that Hazel, as well as herself, was acting a part, the part of a thorough-paced "goody-goody." It was then only a case of "diamond cut diamond."

"Will you introduce me to the man you love when we get to Belfast?" said Hazel, in the same sweet, gentle voice, "I should so like to be a friend to you and to help you if I can."

The other made no answer, for just at that moment a faint cry sounded. "Help!" said a voice. Where had the voice come from? Not a soul was in sight. The fog by this time had settled down almost more thickly than before. Even the bridge upon which the captain stood was invisible. "Help!" said the voice again, this time somewhat more loudly.

"I request you, sir, to mind your own business."

The two girls pressed together almost convulsively.

"What can it be?" whispered Hazel in an awestruck voice.

"It seemed to come from above our head," answered the other in the same terrified accents.

A low moan followed her words. "It *was* in the boat," murmured Miss Fane, "whatever shall we do?"

Now Hazel was a girl to whom cowardice was a stranger. Someone was in trouble, in pain maybe; there was unmistakably a human being lying stricken in the boat that swung above her head.

She did not stop to think, did not pause to reflect that it was assuredly a somewhat curious event that the sound should come from one of the ship's jolly-boats. Her one idea was to succour whoever it was that lay in that extraordinary situation. She was agile and lithe as a panther. Templeton Fane seemed overcome with terror.

"I'll climb up into the boat," whispered Hazel, "and see what's amiss."

The next moment she placed her hand upon the gunwale of the swinging boat, another upon the rope that ran through the block connected with the fall of the davit. In quicker time than it takes to tell it she was over the side of the little vessel, to find that the tarpaulin which was usually spread over it to keep out the wet had been pulled aside and that a moaning figure was stretched out between the thwarts.

Hazel's heart began to beat more quickly. What on earth could be the meaning of so mysterious an occurrence?

"Who are you?" she whispered. "What's the matter? Shall I cry for help?"

"No, no," muttered the figure hoarsely. "Stoop down, I can't move. It's pain to me to talk as loudly as I am doing."

The warm womanly pity in Hazel's heart was stirred to its depths by the piteous appeal. She bent down as well as she could in the somewhat narrow space and

Try for our guinea post-card competition.

Digitized by Google

tried to distinguish in the gloom the face of the speaker. In an instant the man's arms shot out and the unsuspecting girl was pulled down forcibly. She tried to scream, to struggle, but the man's arms held her like a vice.

"Keep still," he hissed, "and I won't hurt you." He uttered a low whistle. In an instant the sound of creaking cordage was followed by a perceptible lowering of the boat from the falls of the davits that secured it to the steamer. Again Hazel tried to scream. "Then there's no help for it," muttered the man. As he spoke the boat fell with a dull splash into the water of the sea, where it lay gently rocking on the oily swell, while the steamer slid past it with engines throbbing unceasingly, to be swallowed up in the gloom of the fog-laden night.

The man had followed up his last words by thrusting a gag with the hand of one practised to the use of such a fell instrument into the captive's mouth. Then with a piece of rope he managed, despite Hazel's struggles, to secure her so that she was powerless to move either hand or foot. This done he got to his seat and shipped a pair of sweeps between the throle pins, and turning the little craft's head, began rowing out into the black darkness.

The fog still lay thick upon the face of the waters. Suddenly the man ceased rowing. He could hear the faint sound as of a ship's engines pulsating through the gloom. In a moment he gave vent to a peculiar whistle uttered thrice. At once an answering signal came out of the darkness. Again he whistled; again the answer, drawing nearer and yet nearer. There was no mistaking the sound now, the steamer was approaching the spot where he and Hazel lay.

Before long a shadowy shape loomed up on his port bow. "*Mermaid* ahoy!" he cried.

"Aye, aye," answered a voice. "Lay to, and we'll draw up alongside."

Then came another voice. "Is all well?"

Hazel's blood seemed to turn to ice in her veins. It was the voice of Horace Caldecott. What hope could there be for her now?

In the meantime it may perhaps be as well to recapitulate and to explain Miss Templeton Fane's action in that night's black deed. It will be remembered that the unknown abductor of Hazel Harlow had explained to the girl the whole plot whereby she could aid in the discomfiture of her lovely fellow-actress.

Miss Fane had been directed to lead Hazel to where the boat hung suspended, the tackle that confined the craft to the steamer had been explained to the girl. All that she had had to do was to unfasten the rope at a given signal and let the boat fall into the water as has already narrated. Her task accomplished, Miss Fane, as though pursued by an unseen foe, fled away in a sudden access of terror from the scene of her base deed. She felt like a murderess. The girl was not wholly bad. Remorse seized hold of her; she sped away to her cabin and got into her bunk, yet there was to be no sleep for her that night.

CHAPTER III.

With some difficulty Hazel was lifted out of the *Mystic's* jolly-boat and conveyed up the side of the steam-yacht *Mermaid*. It was all like some horrid nightmare; the damp obscurity of the night; the sound of feet hurrying along the deck in the dark; the flaming of lights; the muffled sound of orders issued in hoarse voices.

She was carried down to a well-lighted, beautifully appointed cabin. Her bonds were taken off, the gag removed from her mouth. Beside her was an elderly woman, of somewhat weather-beaten appearance, with prominent cheekbones and hard, angular chin. Of Caldecott there was no sign.

Hazel turned to the woman in an access of terror.

"Save me! save me!" she cried piteously. "Is my life to be one long sequence of hideous villainies? What have I done that I should be persecuted so? What have I done that I should be made the victim of so dastardly a plot? By the woman's heart that must beat within your breast I implore you to save me from the monster who has lured me hither."

The woman's mouth seemed to grow a trifle harder. Her cold passionless eyes looked unmoved upon the pitiful picture of this lovely girl pleading for help.

"It's no good your making a fuss," she said. "Why, there's hundreds of girls would give their heads to be where you are at this moment. What's the good of talking nonsense about persecutions and all that? It can't be such a hardship to become the wife of a rich and handsome man like Mr. Horace. Why, I've known him all my life. I owe him everything I've got in the world, so it's no good your trying to blacken his character before me."

Hazel's heart sank within her. Her eyes filled with tears of hopeless agony. She looked wildly round the cabin as though seeking for some means of escape. The woman noted her action.

"Now do be reasonable," she said. "You can't jump out through the port-holes, and you're miles away from any chance of rescue. Mr. Horace has deputed me to tell you that if you will consent to become his wife when we reach Port St. Mary in the Isle of Man, which is not far away from where we are, he won't come near you till we reach land. What shall I tell him?"

"Oh, wait a few minutes—wait a few minutes," cried Hazel beseechingly. "Let me think. I can't realise that it's all true; that I have been trapped away like this; that I'm not really on board the *Mystic* with my friends all round me."

The woman sat down. "You can think for ten minutes," she said coldly; "Mr. Horace doesn't want to hurry you."

In the meantime all was bustle and confusion on the deck of the *Mermaid*. The fog had settled down now like a wall; it was hardly possible to see one's hand before one's face. Horace Caldecott was talking to his skipper.

"We must get rid of the *Mystic's* jolly-boat," he said, "It won't do to leave her floating derelict."

"I don't know," said a voice at his elbow, that of the man who had been responsible for Hazel's capture. "They're bound to get to know of the jolly-boat's disappearance. I should have thought that if you sent her adrift bottom upwards they would think when it was found that I and Miss Harlow were in Davy Jones's locker."

"You're right, Sam," said Caldecott quickly. "It shows that two heads are better than one. If I can once get people to think that, it'll be all the better for my future schemes."

"Confound this fog!" put in the skipper of the yacht. "We shall just have to lie to till it lifts. We can't get

Digitized by Google

any bearings in this, and I for one don't want to be cut in half by a big ship."

Caldecott uttered an oath. "We can't stay here," he said savagely.

The sailor shrugged his shoulders. "Well, perhaps you'll kindly take the wheel," he said; "I've got the engines slowed down to quarter speed now. As far as I can judge we're heading the right way, but I'm not enough of a seaman to be able to take a vessel through a basin of pea-soup."

Caldecott realised that nothing that he could do or say would get him out of the dilemma. He could only curse the fate that prevented him from pushing on to the Isle of Man with all the pressure that the gauges of the *Mermaid's* boilers could stand.

"Well, perhaps the delay will give Hazel time to come to her senses," ran his unspoken thoughts.

The ten minutes specified by the woman who had been constituted Hazel's chaperon were drawing to a close. Hazel had sat mutely on the luxurious settee that ran all round the cabin trying to think out a solution of the terrible problem with which she had been so suddenly confronted. Her only chance now was a respite. If she agreed to marry Caldecott when they reached their destination, it would at least ensure her immunity from his hateful presence until land was reached, and perhaps she would find at Port St. Mary some means of frustrating her captor's resolve. Think as she would she could see no other course open. She sprang to her feet.

"Tell Mr. Caldecott," she said, "that I agree to his terms. He is not to attempt to see me until we reach land. Then"—her voice sank to almost a whisper, and every word seemed to be dragged from her mouth—"I will marry him."

"That's speaking sense," said the woman; "I'll go and tell Mr. Caldecott your decision at once."

She hurried out of the cabin, carefully locking the door behind her. In a moment Hazel sprang to her feet and began hurriedly looking round the room. Her first care was to examine the port-holes, four of which were set in the side of the state-room, but which, with the exception of one, were all screwed tightly down and much too small to allow the passage of a human body. One of them was, however, slightly unfastened, and of this Hazel made a mental note. She could find nothing else in the room, and was just about to resume her seat when her eye was caught by something bright that lay beneath a moveable oak buffet at one end of the cabin. A hurried examination proved this to be a tiny dagger of Oriental workmanship, more of a toy than a weapon—probably used as a paper-knife—yet with a point of surprising keenness. This Hazel thrust in her bosom, "For the worst," she muttered. "In case there is put before me the alternative of one of two crimes—either that of becoming Horace Caldecott's wife or of my own self-destruction, and I think that Heaven would account the latter of the two acts the least criminal."

She resumed her seat and took up exactly the same position as that in which she had been when her duenna had left the cabin. Hardly had she done so when the woman returned bearing in her hand a sheet of paper. This she laid down on the table in the centre of the cabin.

"Mr. Caldecott begs me to compliment you," she said grimly, "on your exceeding good sense. He also told me to remind you of the old proverb 'There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and lip.' He said that unfortunately that had been his experience on more than one occasion, and he didn't want to go through the same chapter of accidents again. He therefore asked me to beg you to be so kind as to put your signature to this document which I will witness." So saying she laid the paper, which was type-written, before Hazel's eyes.

The document ran as follows: "I, Hazel Harlow, late of *The Good Samaritan* Theatrical Touring Company, do hereby faithfully promise that I will go through the ceremony of holy matrimony with Horace Caldecott, of the Manor House, Honeycote, Oxfordshire, at any place or time to be settled by the said Horace Caldecott as he shall think fit, to which witness my hand and signature, ————, in the presence of ————, and the aforesaid," here followed Caldecott's signature in a bold flowing hand. Beneath this was a Somerset House agreement stamp.

The cabin seemed to go round before Hazel's eyes. The business-like appearance of the agreement, the formidable red stamp below, seemed to her unsophisticated eyes to constitute a covenant from which, if it were once signed, there could be no withdrawal. Visions of all the terrors of the law ranged against her seemed to rise up and add realistic terror to the situation.

The woman put a pen in her hand.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" murmured Hazel, breaking out into a paroxysm of tears.

"Do?" came the cold answer; "just sign this paper."

CHAPTER IV.

Eric Monteith had gone to his cabin, and lying down upon his bunk, had tried to sleep. But try as he would he could find no repose. The cabin was unbearably stuffy; the dull throb of the slowly-moving engines droned unceasingly in his ears; the creaking of the vessel's sides, the faint wash of the sea outside, the thousand movements that go on aboard a steamer, combined to help in driving away all thoughts of sleep from his pillow.

At last he could bear it no longer; he determined to go up on deck and seek the fresh air above.

As he reached the hatchway that led up to the deck a woman brushed past him in wild haste and sped down the corridor that led to the ladies' berths. It was Miss Templeton Fane, her face was pale, her hair disordered. She took not the faintest notice of Monteith; her one idea seemed to be to get away to her cabin.

"I wonder what's up with her?" muttered Eric.

When he got up on deck it was to find that the fog had become very dense. The *Mystic* was moving along with painful slowness. Every now and then her syren emitted a dull reverberating hoot. The sound only seemed to add to the gloom of the night.

Eric made his way along the deck, keeping close against the taffrail, until he finally reached the place where not so very long before Hazel and her false fellow-actress had stood.

A noise as of something striking gently against the side of the vessel attracted his listless attention. The closest scrutiny revealed the fact that one of the ship's jolly-boats had disappeared, the noise he had heard was caused by the tackle which should have kept the boat in its place flapping against the ship's side.

"There's something wrong here," he muttered. "Why has that boat gone? It must have been badly fastened to the davits and slipped away into the sea. The captain ought to be told of this. And yet surely," he went on,

Digitized by Google

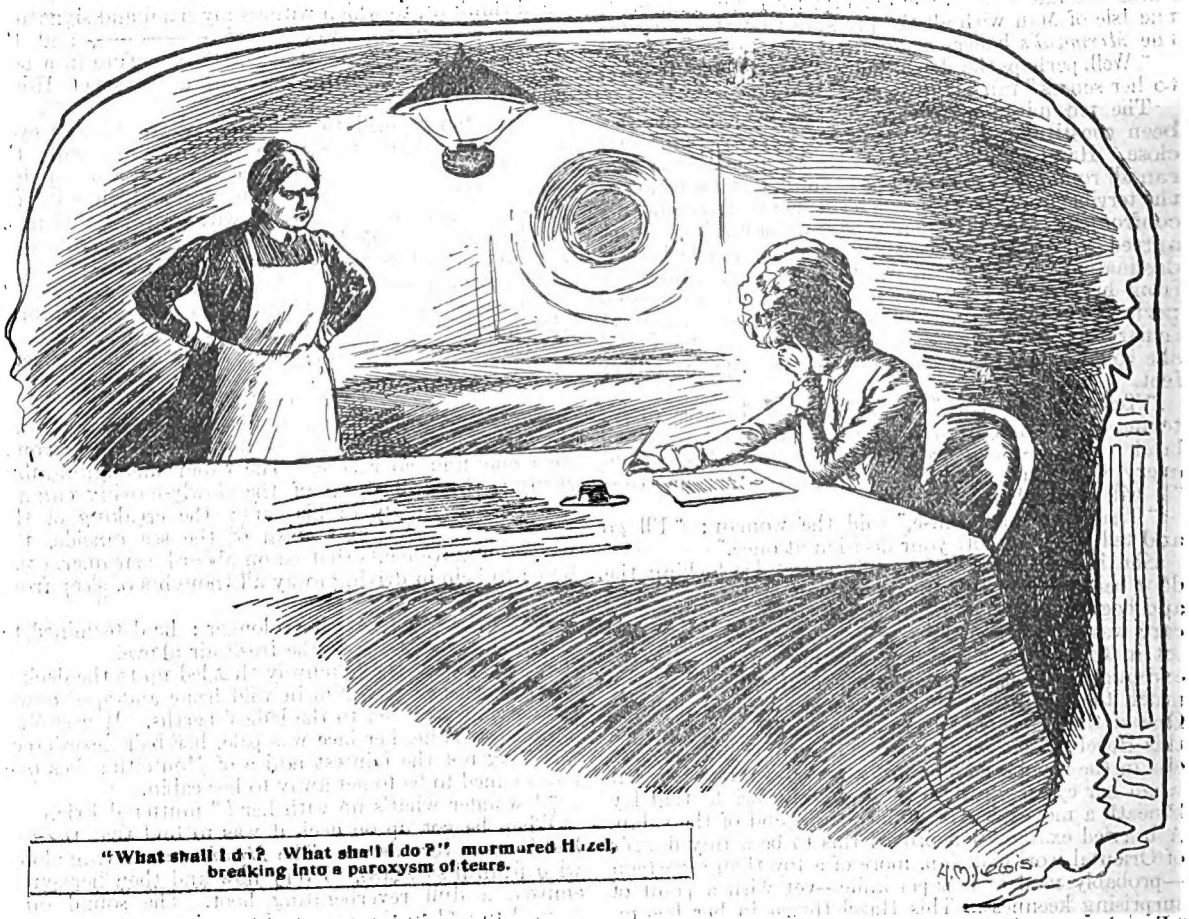
"the boat could not have come unfastened of its own accord. It strikes me that there's more in this than meets the eye."

He hurried back along the way he had come and suddenly ran full tilt into a cloaked figure female. Both recoiled from the shock.

"Is that Mr. Monteith?" asked rather a feeble voice.

"Yes," answered Eric. "And surely I am addressing Miss Lovelace?"

"Yes," replied the actress quickly. "Have you seen Hazel?"



"What shall I do? What shall I do?" murmured Hazel, breaking into a paroxysm of tears.

"No," replied Eric, a sudden fear gripping at his heart. "Isn't she with you?"

"No. Some time ago Miss Templeton Fane came down to our cabin. I was feeling awfully bad, but I heard Miss Fane ask Hazel if she would come on deck. She wanted to ask her advice about something. That was more than half an hour ago, and I thought Hazel ought to have returned by now."

"But I just passed Miss Fane on the stairway," cried Eric, "alone. She seemed very much excited about something."

"Alone!" echoed Jenny. "Then where can Hazel be?"

A cry fell from Eric's lips. "Good Heavens!" he said hoarsely. "Can there be any connection between Hazel's disappearance and the missing boat?" And in quick, hurried speech, he told Jenny about the discovery he had just made.

The obscurity that reigned on every hand hid the deadly pallor that crept over Jenny's face as she listened to her companion's words.

"Let us call the Captain at once," she cried, "and get him to institute a search all over the ship. How can it be possible that Hazel can have gone off in the missing boat? Why she would never have got into it of her own free will; and there surely could have been no cause for her to have left the ship. Anyhow, we must lose no time in finding her. If anything has happened I shall never cease blaming myself for not having gone with her and Miss Fane. I'll go at once to the latter's cabin and hear what she has to say about the affair." So saying, Jenny sped away forgetful now of her sickness, mindful only of the need for instant action.

Eric darted away to find the Captain, to apprise him of the loss of the ship's boat, and to hint that there had been perhaps foul play afoot that would necessitate instant and imperative action.

Monteith's news, as can be readily understood, caused a great sensation throughout the ship. The stewards

You won't forget to get a new reader, will you?

Digitized by Google

and stewardesses were at once told off to visit every cabin and to thoroughly search the vessel to discover if any of the passengers were missing. It then transpired that Miss Hazel Harlow and a passenger who had booked at Liverpool under the name of Herbert Jones, were both missing. In the meantime Jenny had interviewed Miss Templeton Fane.

"Where is Miss Harlow?" she cried, bursting in upon the actress's berth without any ceremony.

A look of fear came into Miss Fane's face. "I don't know," she began, with a would-be air of bravado. "What do you mean by bursting in upon me like this? I am not Miss Harlow's keeper."

"You're lying!" answered Jenny, trying to keep calm. "I heard you myself come and ask Miss Harlow to go on deck with you. Since then no one has seen her, and you were observed coming down the staircase alone."

The actress thus driven into a corner determined on a bold course of action. "Miss Harlow swore me to secrecy," she said in a low voice; "but as you have driven me into a hole, I will tell you the truth. She has eloped in one of the ship's boats with a former lover."

The other uttered a cry. For a moment she stood motionless, her burning eyes fixed upon Miss Fane's face.

"I don't believe you," she cried out; "there has been foul play afoot. I know you hated Miss Harlow. You were jealous of her beauty and her goodness. What have you done with her? What have you done with her?"

Miss Fane was far too much involved now by her complicity in Hazel's abduction to betray her own part in the sinister affair.

"Prove that I am lying," she said defiantly. "What I am telling you is true. Miss Harlow is like other women; she plays her lovers off against one another. You will see that I spoke the truth some day perhaps."

For a moment a murderous desire to fall upon the girl's throat and drag the truth from her by main force almost beat down Jenny's forbearance. With an effort she restrained herself, and without another word left the cabin, her heart a prey to a hundred sickening doubts and fears.

The fog was so dense that the Captain was firmly convinced of the futility of altering the course of the steamer and instituting a search for the missing boat. Amongst the passengers generally, with the exception of course of the members of the Touring Company, the story that Miss Fane had circulated was accepted as the true one. One of the sailors, moreover, declared that he had heard the sound of engines of a steamer apparently lying to in the vicinity of the *Mystic*, and at about the time that Miss Fane had given for the enactment of what everyone was ready to believe a most romantic elopement.

"I have my duty to my employers," the captain of the *Mystic* said, in answer to Eric's impassioned appeal to try and make some effort to find the missing boat and its occupants. "We're late as it is. No, sir, I must push on for Belfast as speedily as possible."

Raymond Venables, in his capacity as manager of the theatrical company, was distraught. He had lost his leading lady and the biggest "draw" in his cast. He had never disguised the fact, moreover, that he was madly in love with the beautiful actress. Yet nothing could be done. As far as he and Eric could see Hazel was lost to them for ever, and could they have known her real plight their feelings would not have undergone any change.

Try as he would Eric could not gather up the threads of the mysterious disappearance of the woman he loved. Miss Fane was not to be shaken in her account of the occurrence, yet Eric could not bring himself to believe that the girl was speaking the truth. Hazel had no former lover save Horace Caldecott. On that point Monteith was positive. And he had been equally positive that Caldecott was not on board the *Mystic* when the steamer left Liverpool. Of the man Herbert Jones nothing was known, yet Monteith was forced to the opinion that somehow Caldecott and Jones were mixed up together in this black, inscrutable mystery.

Would he ever know the real truth? Would he ever see Hazel again? He pictured her at that moment lying cold and dead beneath the waves. Misery unspeakable filled his heart.

As for Jenny Lovelace, her feelings of agony were most poignant. "I shall never cease reproaching myself," she said to Eric, "for having allowed Hazel to go out alone with Miss Fane. Yet how could I think that any danger menaced Hazel out here upon the lonely sea?"

Monteith stifled a groan. "I am sure you have nothing to reproach yourself with, Miss Lovelace," he said in a low voice, "and besides, you were prostrate with sickness. It was no fault of yours. It was the fault of that cruel destiny that hems Hazel in—Hazel, the most beautiful, the most blameless of women, whose path should be strewn with roses instead of being beset by such cruel dangers."

CHAPTER V.

The captain of His Britannic Majesty's cruiser *Wasp* was in a bad temper. He had been ordered to sail from Belfast to Liverpool at forced pressure to test the capabilities of a new type of boiler that a capricious Government had installed on his vessel, and now a dense fog enveloped sea and sky, and added to the darkness of a night that was, by the almanac, moonless.

By his side on the bridge stood his first lieutenant, as annoyed as was his chief at the climatic discomforts.

"Was ever man pursued by viler luck?" said Captain Bambridge. "The old women at the Admiralty aren't here to see the confounded state of affairs, and as likely as not they'll refuse to believe that there was anything more than a Scotch mist about to-night. I've a jolly good mind to signal 'Full steam a-head' and trust to luck. At the most we could only ram a tramp or run down a fishing smack; and what's that when the efficiency of the new boilers is at stake."

The first lieutenant laughed at his chief's saturine humour. "It's a case of being between the devil and the deep sea," he answered. "You can't serve the Admiralty and the owners of tramp steamers."

But although the captain had threatened to signal "Full steam a-head," he knew perfectly well that such a thing was impossible. There was nothing for it but to move slowly forward and to trust to the fog lifting.

Suddenly something happened that brought renewed alertness to Captain Bambridge and Lieutenant Styles. A faint cry rang over the face of the waters.

"Help! Help! Help!" they heard distinctly. The voice was a woman's.

"Great Scott! What's that?" said Styles. "Don't you hear the sounds of a ship's engines, sir?"

The captain's answer was to press a knob at his side, the next moment a great beam of light shot out from the bow of the cruiser, piercing the fog like a flaming ray of molten silver.

Try for our guinea post-card competition.

Digitized by Google

A bell rang down in the bows of the ship; men could be heard scurrying about on the deck; the cruiser swung round a point or two. As she did so a shadowy shape loomed up into the ray of the great search-light.

The captain seized a speaking-trumpet. "Ah-oy, there!" he cried, "what ship are you?"

"Steam-yacht, *Mermaid*, of Port St. Mary, Isle of Man," came the stentorian answer. "Who are you?"

"H.M.S. first-class cruiser *Wasp*. Were you singing out for help just now?"

"No," came the answer; "we're all right."

"I'll swear the cry came from the yacht, sir," whispered Styles hurriedly in his chief's ear.

"I think so, too," answered the captain. "There's something here wants investigating."

"Lie to," he roared in answer; "we're sending a boat alongside, and no bunkum mind. I've got the range of you."

A muttered curse was the answer to reach the ears of the two officers.

With that promptitude for which British tars are world-famous, a picked crew of bluejackets with the first lieutenant himself in command, manned one of the *Wasp's* long-boats, and in a marvellously short time was rowing with long measured sweep towards the suspicious steam-yacht.

Styles himself was the first to board the *Mermaid*. He was met by Caldecott, who broke out with: "What does this intrusion mean, sir? Have the officers of His Majesty's Navy taken to piracy?"

Styles took very little notice of his chagrin. "I heard a cry for 'help,'" he answered curtly, "in a woman's voice coming from this yacht. I must be under the necessity of searching your vessel."

He motioned to a couple of bluejackets. "Search the yacht thoroughly," he said, "and then report to me here."

A few minutes passed by, then the bluejackets appeared. With them was a girl at the sight of whom the naval lieutenant gave utterance to a sound of amazement. "Surely I know you?" he said blankly; "you're Miss Hazel Harlow, the actress about whom everyone is talking now."

"Yes, yes," answered Hazel breathlessly. Then she threw herself at the young sailor's feet. "Save me, sir, save me!" she cried. "Take me away anywhere so long as I escape from him"—indicating Caldecott with a gesture of horror.

The inflammable Styles, overcome by the sight of beauty in such distress, raised the girl to her feet.

"Certainly I'll save you," he said in a mystified voice. "What does it all mean? I have a boat here, and we can have you on board the *Wasp* in a jiffy, and perhaps we had better take the *Mermaid* in tow, so as to institute inquiry when we reach land."

"No, no," cried Hazel; "I want to get away from him; I never want to see his face again, and if he comes I shall have all the horror of publicity to face. Only take me to Belfast where my friends will be, and you will put me under a debt of gratitude that I shall never be able to repay."

Styles looked puzzled, as well he might. He had as yet only the most meagre details to help him in his elucidation of this mystery of the sea. He looked at Hazel's pale, beautiful face, and from her to Horace Caldecott, who, lowering and resentful, stood silently at his side.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" asked the lieutenant sharply.

Caldecott shrugged his shoulders. "Only that I picked up Miss Harlow drifting helplessly on the open sea in a steamer's jolly-boat. You will not deny that, I think," he said, turning to Hazel and trying to repress the smouldering passion that lay behind his eyes.

Hazel turned from him with a shudder. "Take me away," she said to the lieutenant faintly.

Styles, now more hopelessly mystified than ever, issued a few sharp orders; the result of these was that Hazel found herself snugly stowed away in the stern-sheets of the cruiser's long-boat and being rapidly rowed away from the hateful presence of Horace Caldecott.

She was taken on board the cruiser and conveyed to the captain's private cabin. To Bambridge, an elderly married man and eminently kind-hearted, she poured out the whole story of how she had been lured away from the *Mystic* and into Caldecott's clutches. Bambridge was furious.

"Why on earth did you let the fellow go, Miss Harlow?" he cried. "You could have had him locked up for this; a rascal like that has no business to be at large. From your account he must be a man of money and leisure. Say the word and I'll put about the cruiser's head," the *Wasp* was steaming back towards Belfast, "and have him in prison in a brace of shakes."

Had it been any other girl but Hazel, the answer to this proposition would probably have been in the affirmative, but Hazel was no ordinary girl. The modest retirement of her nature engendered by her long communion with nature when living at the farm at Honeycote, had never fostered in her heart the fierce extremes of love and hate that come so readily to some natures.

The danger put behind her for the present, she did not think of the future. She did not seem to realise that with Horace Caldecott she was dealing with a man whose nature was as far different from hers as the Poles are distant. He was a man of fierce passions, unscrupulous, almost a monomaniac where Hazel was concerned. She did not realise that in him she had found a lover who would never rest while life remained to him, from endeavouring to gain possession of the woman whom, as yet, all his most desperate schemes had failed to secure.

It was nine o'clock the next morning before the *Wasp* steamed into Belfast Harbour. The fog had lifted, and the *habitues* of the port were astounded to see the cruiser return. "A break-down," the more knowing ones uttered, "the Admiralty would have done better to have stuck to the old Scotch boilers."

But that there was no break-down soon became apparent. A boat put out from the cruiser's side in the stern of which a woman's form could be described. What on earth could be the meaning of such an extraordinary occurrence? But when it was seen that the young lady was exceedingly beautiful, and had, moreover, no luggage except the clothes she wore the mystification deepened. Where on earth had the *Wasp* picked up its beautiful cargo?

* * * * *

The members of *The Good Samaritan* Company were assembled on the stage of the Theatre Royal, Belfast. Consternation was depicted on every face save that of Miss Templeton Fane and her companion Juliet Fitzgerald, who were of course "in the know," to use a vulgarism.

Raymond Venables seemed beside himself. "It is a terrible thing," he was saying, "a terrible thing! And

Digitized by Google

yet the performance must be got through somehow to-night. Miss Granville, as Miss Harlow's understudy, will take the part of Ruth to-night. I must ask you ladies and gentlemen to try and banish from your minds the remembrance of what happened last night. We must get to rehearsal at once." He gave vent to a deep sigh. Then something happened that was perhaps more dramatic than any scene in a play could ever be. A sound came from the wings, and the figure of a woman hurried to the centre of the stage. It was Harlow Hazel. For a moment the whole company stood as if spellbound. A cry from Miss Templeton Fane broke the silence. She dashed forward and flung herself at Hazel's feet. "Mercy! mercy," she wailed. "I was tempted."

Hazel took no notice of the prostrate figure. She had only eyes for the three whom she knew despite the differences of their characters were her true friends—Eric, Jenny, and Raymond Venables.

Jenny flung herself into her friend's arms. "Hazel, Hazel," she cried, "is it really you? Where have you come from?"

"I will tell you the story another time, dear Jenny," answered Hazel gravely. "Thank Heaven, I am really safe and sound."

She held out her hand to Eric. There were tears in the young man's eyes as he grasped it fervently, tears of unutterable joy and devotion.

That evening Hazel related to Jenny and Eric the full story of how she had been induced to enter the *Mystic's* jolly-boat; how Miss Fane had lowered her and her unknown captor into the sea; how she had been taken on board the *Mermaid*, and how she had finally been confronted by the agreement that bound her to become Horace Caldecott's wife. "Half beside myself," she said, "I took the pen in my hand and was about to sign the hateful document, at my wits' end to know what else to do, when suddenly through the one half-opened port-hole of the cabin my straining ears caught the faint sound as of a ship's engines near at hand. In a moment I had leapt to the port-hole and flung it open. 'Help! help!! help! I screamed with all the strength of my lungs. The woman who had been put in charge of me flung herself upon me; but I was stronger than she and overpowered her. Then suddenly Horace Caldecott came into the cabin; his face was livid with rage. He made a step towards me, and for a moment I thought he was going to kill me, but just at that moment I heard the sound of a man's voice hailing the yacht. Caldecott turned, and, with an oath, dashed up the stairway that led on to the deck. In an incredibly short space of time two bluejackets burst into the cabin. I at once begged them to take me away, which they did." The rest of the story my readers already know.

In the theatre that night a large audience witnessed the first performance of *The Good Samaritan* in Belfast. Most of the warmhearted Irish people who applauded Hazel's performance had got some inkling of the romance of the night before in which Hazel had been involved. She met with a reception that eclipsed any of her previous triumphs, and few who beheld her passing through all the scenes in which the heroine of the play took part could understand what a strain it was to the young girl whose nerves had been so sorely tried by such a harrowing adventure as that which she had experienced.

As for *H.M.S. Wasp*, what looked at first sight a calamity turned out to be a blessing, for a glorious calm day followed the dense fog of the night before. The cruiser made a record run to Liverpool, and her boilers proved themselves capable of being worked at high pressure without fear of accident.

And on board the *Wasp* was a lovelorn first lieutenant. Styles had succumbed, as so many others had done, to the wonderful charms of Hazel Harlow, and near his heart lay a cabinet photograph of the young actress which had been taken in Sheffield. On the back of this was written, "To Lieutenant Styles, in grateful remembrance, from Hazel Harlow."

Thus ended what might have been, but for the merest chance, an end to all Hazel Harlow's hopes for the future. Once more by the aid of Providence she had baulked the man she hated of his fell desires.

Just Published.

THINGS A WOMAN WANTS TO KNOW.

With an illustrated section on "The Folding of Serviettes."

Edited by ISOBEL of "Home Notes."

Crown 8vo. cloth, price 1s., postage 2d. extra.

Some of the numerous subjects dwelt upon in this excellent handbook are:

To Remove Acid Stains—Uses of Alum—Uses of Ammonia—To Whiten Arms and Neck—First Food for Babies—How to Feed Babies—A Good Baking Powder—The Temperature of Baths, etc.—Boiled Beef—Bees and Wasps Stings—To Destroy Beetles—How to Keep Birds in Cages—To Restore Black Dresses—Blistered Feet—To Remove Flat Taste from Boiled Water—To Soften and Waterproof Boots and Shoes—To Make Brilliantine To Treat Bunions—Tips About Butter—Administering Castor Oil—To Clean Smoked Ceilings—Easily-made Cement—Chapped Hands and Lips—Chilblains—Tips Concerning Children's Health, etc.—To Extinguish Chimneys on Fire—To Economise Coal—Remedy for Cold Feet—Constipation—To Cool a Room—Coughs—Cream—Cucumbers—To Test Damp Beds—Diarrhœa—Colours and the Dyes they will Take—Earache—Hints About Eggs—The Eyes—To Wash Fine Lace—Hints About Fish—To Prepare Floors for Dancing—To Keep Flowers Fresh—Garnishes—To Remove Grease—The Hair and Hands—Cure for Headaches—Icing for Cakes—To Remove Ink Stains—To Clean Jewellery, Kettles, Kid Gloves. Knives, Mother of Pearl, Old Bottles, Painted Work, Stone Stairs, Wall Papers, Wooden Tables, Window Blinds, etc.—Hints About Lamps—To Preserve Lemons—To Make a Linseed Poultice—Tips About Meat, Milk, Potatoes, Poultry, Puddings, Salads, Soups, Tea Stains—To be Rid of Mice, Moths, Rats, Vermin, etc. Nettle-rash—To Take Creases Out of Paper—Hints About Paraffin—On Making Pastry—On Making Condy's Fluid—To Hang Pictures—Remedy for Pimples—Antidotes to Poisons—Tips About Saucepans—To Soften the Skin—Uses of Soapsuds and Soda—To Remove Stains—Hints About Tea, Toffee, Tooth Powder, Uses of Turpentine—To Make Violet Powder—To Revive Withered Flowers—Lotion for Wrinkles, etc, etc.

ORDER FORM. S.S.

To the Book Publisher,
17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Please send me a copy of "Things a Woman Wants to Know," for which I inclose the sum of One Shilling and Twopence.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Mr. H. T. Johnson writes our next serial. See Editor's Page.

Digitized by Google

THE OPAL STUD.

"HANG the key! Why does it always stick when I'm in a hurry?"

The speaker was a girl about twenty-two, struggling to unlock a portmanteau. The exigencies of the situation take her at a disadvantage, and prohibit a description of her costume. On a chair hung a dripping coat and skirt, and a pair of neat boots set upside down within the fender suggested water draining out. Miss Clare West, while sight-seeing at Quebec, had been caught and drenched in a storm of rain and was now returning to the hotel Château Frontenac to dress for dinner, due in twenty minutes.

As she stood petulantly fumbling with the keys, uttering impatient masculine imprecations, she might almost have been mistaken for a boy, with her tall, athletic figure and short curly hair.

"The confounded thing!" she spluttered, and tried another key. This time it turned, and she flung the lid back.

"Great Scott! What's this? Who put this here?" she demanded, drawing out an embroglio of bands and buttonholes, and holding it up gingerly between her finger and thumb.

"Stocking suspenders? No! By Jupiter, it's braces or I'm a Dutchwoman!"

The next shock was a pair of trousers.

"It's not mine at all," she cried, in indignant dismay, "it's some beastly man's trunk."

Slamming down the lid angrily, she examined the surface. Sure enough there were her initials, "C.W."

"That's me. And so is the trunk to look at. But the contents aren't," she declared, with a wholesale massacre of grammar. "And now how the mischief am I to scuttle down to *table d'hôte* in seventeen minutes?"

She strode toward the bell to summon the chambermaid, when a vagrant fancy brought her to a halt, with a merry but daring expression in her handsome Irish blue eyes.

"By Jupiter! What fun it would be!" broke from her lips irresistibly. "What an ecstatic lark! Not a soul knows me here, and this time to-morrow I shall be a hundred miles on my way home by the *Dominion*. Why should I not chance it? Who's to find out? And oh! what copy it would make!"

* * * * *

The great function of dinner was in full progress in the magnificent *table d'hôte salon* of the Chateau Frontenac, as a handsome but foppish looking boy entered and stood vaguely gazing round the crowded tables with a cool self-assurance. He gave the impression of being one of stiff-starched, ultra-conceited masher youths, whom the average man of the world feels inclined to kick at sight. Fastidiously stuffing his silk handkerchief into his sleeve, and with his chin very high in the air, he strolled towards a vacant seat and was about to appropriate it, when the head waiter interposed with the notification that it was engaged and conducted him to a small, remote table, where, to his obvious disgust, he was placed next to the only occupant, an individual in tweed travelling suit, who looked like a sparrow amidst swallows.

The boy frowned, flicked out his coat tails, drew his chair under him and leisurely proceeded to unfold his serviette, craning his head as he did so to survey the visitors. Then he ran his hand daintily through his hair, cast a haughty glance at his neighbour, elevated his eyebrows in marked disapproval of his unconventional costume and applied himself with an ineffable expression to a study of the menu card.

"Aw—any sort of soup," was his order, "and—aw—bottle of champagne."

The man in tweed glanced at him, and resumed the section of his mullet with the freezing air of insularity Englishmen affect among strangers.

The bumptious boy absorbed his soup with exaggerated precaution against soiling his immaculate and expansive shirt-front and ostentatious applications of his serviette to his upper lip—a quite superfluous ceremony.

Then he revived himself with a critical sip at his champagne, scowled, filled up his glass, and turning to the man in tweed, so far descended from his pedestal of conceit as to observe:

"Beastly day."

"Foggy," was the laconic reply. He was a good-looking man, with a large moustache, and pleasant grey eyes.

"Stopping long?" drawled the boy.

"Can't say."

"Shocking bad cooking I call it," complained the boy, pushing his plate away peevishly.

"Do you? I call it uncommonly good," contradicted the man, with imperturbable calm.

The boy elevated his chin stiffly over his cut-throat collar, turned his head like an automaton, and regarded the man with supercilious surprise. "By jove, you're jolly easy to please. It's the worst I've tasted in my voyage round the world!"

The man looked up, a rebuke evidently hovering on his lips. But it dissolved as his glance fell on the conceited youngster, who apparently unconscious of his impertinence, was picking at an imaginary moustache, and spoiling his good looks with his abominable affectation. There was nothing to be gained by breaking this butterfly on a wheel, and the man contented himself with a survey of contemptuous pity, until his eyes happened to be arrested by the boy's opal shirt stud.

"Wine rank gooseberry," criticised the boy, choking over a too hasty gulp of his champagne.

You won't forget to get a new reader, will you?

Digitized by Google

"Did you get a better brand at school?" asked the man, with quiet sarcasm.

"I do not follow the drift of your observation," replied the boy haughtily, presenting the full and overpowering expanse of his shirt front to crush his neighbour.

The man was not intimidated. "No drift in it," he said coolly, as he bent forward and stared critically into the white field of linen, which caused the boy to repeat the ceremony of using his serviette.

There was a pause, and the boy leant languidly back, his hands buried deep in his pockets, and on his face a *blasé* air of being profoundly bored.

A couple of courses passed without remark. The boy sipped constantly at his champagne, and investigated all the people within view. At last he spoke.

"Not a bad-looking girl over there. The one in pink crépon. Next the old ruin in grey."

The man glanced in the direction and grunted.

"Pity mothers are such fools as to parade daughters themselves. Ought to hire décent-looking women to show them off. Such a handicap to a girl when a fellow can tot up what she is likely to total. Puts a fellow off, don't you know. Now that girl, by herself——"

"Yes."

"Well—she's tolerably decent. Crumby, I call her. But I bet my boots she'll bake into crust, like the old mother."

"Supposing the elder lady is not her mother."

"Suppose rubbish! Look at the faces."

"Look at the facts."

"Hullo! Do you know them?"

"Slightly."

"Oh, I say, sorry I spoke. Awfully mortified, old chap. Hope I said nothing to wound your feelings."

"Don't distress yourself."

The boy puckered his handsome face. "But I really am awfully sorry. Wouldn't have done it for worlds. Makes a man feel such an accidental cad, don't you know."

Beneath the surface of conceit he was genuinely distressed.

"The best way to avoid that unenviable misfortune," hinted the man gravely, "is to treat every strange lady with the respect due to her sex—as if she were your mother or sister."

"Or your *fiancée*," sniggered the incorrigible youth.

"Or your——" The man stopped suddenly, his eyes focussed on the boy's shirt front, which was again presented with an air of patronising condescension.

The scrutiny seemed to disconcert the boy, who lifted his glass of champagne hurriedly and drained it at a gulp. By the way it made his cheeks flush and his eyes wink he seemed susceptible to the influence of what he had so disparagingly condemned as "rank gooseberry." With a sort of bravado he turned boldly to the man and laughed out:

"Well, luck to the ladies, anyhow! 'Pon my word, this fizz is a better tipple than I gave it credit for at first."

"I see you're a judge of champagne," said the man, with an amused twinkle.

"So, so," admitted the boy, falling back into his languid conceit. "Every fellow knows what suits him best. The best judge is the man who judges best—for himself. Let me choose my own wine, my own weed, and my own wife, and, by Jupiter, I won't go far wrong. But I say"—he branched off a little hilariously—"if you know that pretty girl, why the dickens didn't you get planted next to her at dinner? Hang me, if I'd only had such a chance——" and he shot his cuff and fondled his chin with the self-satisfied air of a coxcomb.

"I'm not exactly dressed to dine with ladies."

"No, by gad—no more you are! Rather wondered how you could face the music in that slump," assented the boy, impudently. "Makes a fellow feel so beastly out of it."

"No one notices a traveller," said the man, "and I hope to be off by the *Dominion* to-morrow."

The boy paused, hastily poured himself out another glass of champagne, gulped it down, and pushed his chair back.

"Confound it, I can't stand these long, dull dinners,' he ejaculated, with unabashed effrontery. "So insipid and slow! I'm off to whiff a cigarette. Ta, ta!" and with a cool nod of his head he rose and sauntered out.

No sooner had he reached the hall than he quickened his pace, when, to his surprise, an arm was slipped through his.

It was the man in tweed.

"I think I'll join you, my young friend," and without more ado he gently but firmly guided the boy into the smoking-room. "Try one of my cigars," he added, as he closed the door.

"Oh, thanks. You're awfully kind. But I never whiff anything except a cigarette after dinner. Where's my case, I wonder?" He was diving awkwardly into his tail pocket with a single hand. "Hang it. I must have left it in my room. I'll go and fetch it."

"No, no," interposed the man. "I insist upon your trying one of my cigars. I should like to have your opinion. 'Wine, weeds, and a wife'—wasn't it?—you don't go wrong about?"—and with a good-natured perseverance the man forced a cigar into the boy's unwilling hand and held a lighted match for him.

"Come, there's a comfortable lounge over there," went on the man, linking his arm into the boy's again and leading him to one of the big bay windows; "ah—and here's the coffee."

"What number, sir?" asked the waiter.

"What number? Oh, I say. I never remember numbers, you know," declared the boy.

"What name, sir?"

The boy blew a hasty cloud of smoke from his cigar and plunging his hand into his pocket drew out—a lady's purse.

"I'll pay for the coffee," he said, handing the waiter a dollar. "Never mind the change," and he flurriedly crammed the purse back into his pocket.

The incident was not lost on the man in tweed, whose grey eyes were fixed curiously on the boy, in whom conceit had given way to a certain air of confusion.

"So you never remember numbers?" observed the man.

"Never could—except, ha, ha—Number One," answered the boy with a sickly grin.

"Ever find yourself in the wrong box?" asked the man.

The boy had no reply for this, but fidgetting about, crossing and recrossing his legs nervously, and continually shifting his position. To add to his discomfiture his socks had wrinkled down over his shoes, and he had to stoop and pull them up, displaying a rather uncommon orange and grey pattern. The man in tweed took deliberate observation of them, and then bent forward, and fixing his gaze on the boy's shirt front, asked him casually:

Try for our guinea post-card competition.

Digitized by Google

"How do you find the cigar?"

"Oh, uncommonly good," declared the boy, his pale cheeks contradicting his commendation, as he held it out at arm's length and pretended to admire the ash. "But it's a little too strong for me. In fact, I think I'll run up and fetch my own cigarette case. I'll be back directly." And he rose rather unsteadily to his feet.

The man rose, too, with a purpose in his features.

"Pardon me, but that's an unusually fine opal stud you are wearing," and he suddenly hooked his finger into the boy's shirt front to better expose the stone.

The boy sprang back, his face aflame.

"I only wanted to examine the stud," said the man quietly.

"Oh! All right. But hold on half a minute, old fellow. Fact is, that strong cigar you pressed on me has rather upset me. I can't wait. Feel queer and foggy. I'll send you down the stud to examine at your leisure. Sorry to have to leave you so unceremoniously, but—but——"

"Enough," said the man, in a low, meaning voice. "No more of this acting. Follow me."

"Follow you?" cried the boy, indignantly, drawing back and raising his voice. "I'll—I'll see you hung first." And he quickly whipped round for the door.

"Don't make a scene," whispered the man, catching him up. "It's no good. You are fairly caught. Be sensible and come along quietly."

"You brute!" hissed the boy between his teeth, "you must be drunk to behave like this. Hands off! I'll call the manager if you attempt to molest me."

"Excellent. We'll both call on the manager," said the man, as without further ceremony he gripped the boy's arm and marched him to the office.

"Where are you taking me to?" faltered the boy.

"To be searched."

"Searched, you scoundrel? How can you suggest such an awful thing?" choked the boy, struggling to free himself.

"Nothing awful about it—except your cheek. Come—in you go."

The manager jumped up from the table where he was writing. "Major Wargrave! Anything wrong, sir?"

"Yes," said the major sternly; "I've tracked the thief. With a lady's purse in his pocket, into the bargain. Search him and you'll see for yourself."

"Oh, you brute!" burst out the boy, blushing scarlet and retreating into a corner. "You cowardly, ungentlemanly cad to suggest such a thing."

Seizing one of the boy's wrists he twisted the arm behind his back.

"See here, you rogue," said the manager curtly. "Better own up and shell out and go off quietly to the police-station. We don't want any fuss in the hotel."

"What have I done?" demanded the boy. "How dare you treat me like this? Let me go at once!" and he made a frantic dash for the door.

"What have you done? Well, I never!" cried the manager, and he slipped in front of the door and bolted it.

"The lady's purse," observed Major Wargrave, "is in his right hand trousers pocket."

The manager approached the boy with the evident intention of abstracting it, when a blow, delivered with excellent aim and considerable force, sent him back.

Major Wargrave closed with the boy. "Is that how the cock fights! Well, you've only yourself to blame, you young cub, if you get roughly handled." And seizing one of the boy's wrists he twisted the arm behind his

"Adventures of an Actress" still going strong.

Digitized by Google

back. "Now, Mr. Moore, get the purse from his pocket, and slip the opal stud out of his shirt front."

The boy gave a shriek. "Don't touch me—don't touch me!" he implored piteously. "There is a mistake. I'll confess all!" The ring of abject terror and horror in his voice induced the major to loosen his hold.

"Well, then—confess," he said briefly. "And be quick about it."

The boy turned pale and panting. When at last he did speak his whole manner had changed, and with it his character.

"And you call yourself a gentleman to take advantage of a girl like this?"

"A girl!" cried the major, falling back confounded.

"As if you didn't know!"

"I never dreamt of such a thing."

"You staring brute! You did know. Or you would not have stared at me as you did."

"Stared at you!" protested the major, blushing now as badly as the quondam boy. "I was not staring at you. I was staring at my opal stud. It was in my portmanteau, which is missing. I saw you wearing it. You wouldn't give your number. You wouldn't give your name. You grew white and uncomfortable——"

"White and uncomfortable!" cried the quondam boy with a stamp of his foot. "Were not your eyes enough to make me so? Not to mention that vile cigar. But I wasn't going to be out-tricked by you."

"Oh—ah—yes—the cigar. Of course. But the socks. I recognised them. Indeed, I seem to recognise the whole outfit now. That was why I asked you to let me examine the stud—a trinket I value very much."

"There! Take your stud! Do you think I wanted to steal it? Do I look like a thief?"

A pair of handsome eyes flashed sparks of fire at the major as with agitated fingers the stud was torn out, and flung down on the table. "And now, sir, be pleased to make way for me."

"Oh, no. Not just yet," interposed the manager. "I've come across many hotel sharps, but this is something quite new in hotel sniping. We must have an explanation. Why are you dressed in man's clothes? Are they Major Wargrave's?"

The quondam boy shrank back with face hidden.

"Who are you? How came you to sneak into the hotel?"

"Sneak into the hotel, you wretch! I am staying here. I am Miss West. Your porter brought the wrong trunk to my room, and left it there in my absence. A black one, with the initials 'C. W.' on it—the facsimile of mine. And one of my keys fitted it."

The manager glanced at the ledger. "Yes. There's a Clare West in No. 46. Are you Clare West?"

"Brute! I'm Miss West. Haven't I told you so?"

"Telling is not enough. You must explain this extraordinary conduct. And, if your story is satisfactory, leave the hotel instantly. We can't have women masquerading in men's clothes in the Chateau Frontenac."

Clare West gave a shudder. "I am not humiliated enough, but you must insult me. Oh, sir" (to the major) "you are very chivalrous, who preached chivalry to me at dinner!" Then a sudden resolution stormed and animated her features. Drawing herself erect she faced the two men. "You shall have your explanation. I only arrived this afternoon late. There was an hour to spare, and I went out, but was caught in the storm and soaked through. When I returned to my room there was a trunk there exactly like mine. I opened it in the belief it was. When I found out the mistake that had been made I was going to ring for the chambermaid when a—a mad freak entered my head to go down to *table d'hôte* as a man, and get copy for a letter. I am the round-the-world correspondent of the *Go-Ahead Girl*, and I thought—I thought it would make such a—a striking and o-original article, and be such—such—fun!" At which juncture, to illustrate humour of the situation, Clare West broke down and abandoned herself to tears.

The manager whistled incredulously, but a grim look from Major Wargrave silenced him.

"Miss West," said the major in a grave, kind voice, "I beg your pardon. Believe me, I laboured under an entire misapprehension. You acted your part so cleverly I mistook you for a boy. And now, if you'll slip quietly back to your room, I will cover your return, if—if you will let me."

* * * * *

It was inevitable they should meet on the Royal mail steamer *Dominion*, on which they had both booked passages. Most girls would have forfeited theirs a thousand times rather than subjected themselves to such a meeting, but Clare West (except perhaps for one swift glance of gratitude from her tear-washed eyes on the stairs) had not thanked Major Wargrave, and she persuaded herself that to sail in the same steamer, much as she dreaded it, would be a proper act of penance on her part. He had no suspicion she was to be a fellow passenger, and when, as the ship was passing the island of Anticosti, a lady addressed him by name, he was at a loss for a moment to recognise her.

"I am Miss West," she said, "and I want to apologise and say how sorry I am, and—and to thank you for your chivalry."

"Don't—please don't," he said, with a pained look in his face. "I haven't forgiven myself yet for being such a brute as to twist your arm."

"And so I really took you in?" she returned, with a little gleam of satisfaction.

"You took Mr. Moore in, who is as sharp as I'm stupid."

"And as cruel as you are kind," added Clare emphatically.

Somehow that audaciously conceived letter, "At *Table d'hôte* in Trousers," never made its appearance in the *Go-Ahead Girl*. In point of fact, it was never written, although there was an abundance of crisp material for copy. The article that took its place was headed "Nearing Home." It was voted sickly sentimental by the more robust readers of the journal, who wondered what had happened to "C. W."—generally so smart and cynical with her pen.

When it appeared in print, however, the familiar initials no longer stood for Clare West, and Major Wargrave's opal guarded a wedding ring on her finger.

£25 per Week in Prizes.

Next week full particulars of a new competition, the most interesting ever devised, will appear in

SHORT STORIES.

FOR NORA'S SAKE.

By R. NORMAN SILVER.

Author of "Hate, the Destroyer," etc.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE WELLAM WOODS.

"CAN you tell me the way to the Mains, my good fellow —Mrs. Brabazon's place, I mean; it's on the river somewhere, isn't it?"

The person addressed was a tall servant in a quiet livery, who, aided by a subordinate, was setting forth, on a smooth stretch of greensward, the conveniences for a substantial cold lunch—knives, forks, serviettes, and wine-glasses. On the top of the large wicker basket which had contained these accessories was displayed, under a protecting gauze, an inviting array of viands—galantine of chicken, salad, bear's ham, oyster patties, and a seductive Strasbourg pie, flanked by a dish of trifle and an assortment of jellies. Close by a magnum of champagne poked its neck from the depths of a cooler, and some bottles of hock and claret kept it in countenance.

The man who had spoken twitched his cuffs nervously under the sleeves of his coat; his linen was soiled and ragged. Nor was the rest of his costume less suggestive of poverty. He wore a silk hat, it is true, but the once rakish shape of that article was sorely battered, and its brim saturated with grease. A dingy four-in-hand tie, a "flash" diamond pin, and a threadbare morning suit completed the querist's attire. His face was purple and bloated, and his mouth betrayed both impudence and astuteness.

The smart servant looked suspiciously at his questioner. "I'm Mrs. Brabazon's first footman," he said with lofty self-possession; "and these here woods is her private property. The road from the station leads to the lodge gates, as anyone could have told you."

The other smiled deprecatingly. "So I believe," he admitted; "I was trying for a short cut. But I find I've forgotten the lie of the land—I was ten years younger when I was last in these regions. How is Mrs. Brabazon —and—and the girls?"

"They enjoy excellent 'ealth," was the dignified reply; "but you'll excuse me, this is the luncheon place for the shooting party, and, being her own estate, Mrs. Brabazon won't expect to see strangers hanging around. If you cross the bridge yonder and keep the straight path, you'll get into the high road near the Mains."

"All right," said the wearer of the shabby garments and the disreputable hat; "I'm off. But may I ask if—if Miss Chisholm will be among those partaking of this—ahem!—elegant refection?"

"She will," retorted the footman; "she come up with us in the launch just now, not being, you may say, a sportswoman like Miss Olive and Mrs. Brabazon, as have been out with the guns all the morning, and shooting themselves. And nice and sharp-set the lot of them'll be; so I'll thank you to leave me to my work."

Shrugging his shoulders the inquirer lounged away and disappeared over the indicated bridge, a rustic structure of poles and split boughs. On the further side he swerved suddenly and crouched down, behind a mass of willows on the upper bank of the stream. In front of him was the edge of the Wellam Woods and the glade on whose carpet of emerald turf there gleamed the white damask and shining cutlery of Mrs. Brabazon's shooting luncheon.

Between, the brown waters of the Wellam slipped by, carrying on their ruffled surface the withered leaves of yet another summer. Warm as was the air, splendid as were the rustling forest trees, the month was September. A day of swift and ruthless reckoning had dawned for the partridges in the rolling turnip-fields that bordered for a full mile the south bank of the river.

While he gazed, a twig crackled hard by, and he shrank into his species of bower, to see saunter past a youthful Briton, handsome, bronzed, muscular, his gun under his arm and his eyes bent upon his companion, a girl in a simple flowered muslin and a big straw piled with roses. They moved on towards the bridge, laughing and chattering.

"You are an incorrigible sentimentalist, Miss Chisholm," reached the ear of the man behind the willows; "but there, I confess it is an unfashionable quality that seems to belong to a certain kind of girl."

"What sort of girl, Captain Lane?" was the gay inquiry; "'a certain kind' is terribly vague, it may hide a compliment or disguise an—well, the reverse."

Captain Lane bent his head and his firm tenor trembled a little as he murmured: "The sort of girl one's mother might have been, Miss Chisholm; the sort of girl that makes a fellow wish he'd tried to run straighter all his life; the sort of girl one can't chaff; the sort of girl that—that kiddies like to play with. Oh, Miss Chisholm, I'm a bad hand at stringing words together, but you know what I mean; the sort of girl that ought to have a sweet old name such—such as Nora."

They had stepped on the bridge now and were out of hearing, so far as the tenant of the willow copse was concerned. Nora Chisholm blushed and was about to descend in silence the wooden stairs at the extremity of the single rustic span, when her escort leapt down and offered her his strong palm for support. Nora leaned on it momentarily, but the warm colour grew in her cheeks.

"What a deal of flattery," she cried, "because I can't bear to kill the poor partridges and pheasants! Other people call me a coward and don't trouble to invent excuses for me."

"You need no better excuse than your own gentle heart," was the response; "why, I have been quite reluctant to pull a trigger this morning, just through your bringing me out yesterday and showing me that you knew more of the poor partridges than we who delight in slaughtering them. You are a born naturalist, Miss Chisholm."

"Indeed, I am no such thing." Nora assured him;

You won't forget to get a new reader, will you?

Digitized by Google

"I have only talked to the keepers, and crept about with a field-glass when all was quiet. But the birds and beasts got not to be afraid of me at last. That's why it hurts me to think of your cruel guns and dogs—no, the dogs aren't cruel, you teach them to hunt. But see, there is Mrs. Brabazon and Olive and Fanshawe with the lunch waiting to be popped into our mouths. Yes, and after come Sir George and the Admiral."

Captain Lane sighed as he broke off his *tête-à-tête* with Miss Chisholm to pass his gun to a keeper. Nora patted the dogs as they fawned upon her, whining with pleasure at the encounter.

"Ah, here you are, Nora!" exclaimed a good-humoured voice, whose owner was a plump, active woman of medium height and florid complexion. She was clad in a tweed shooting costume, and had that instant relinquished a double-barrelled sporting gun to an attendant. By her walked, or rather lounged, a fair girl with a proud, almost disdainful, cast of countenance and a fine figure, set off by her piquant dress, short skirt, and many-buttoned gaiters.

"Hope you enjoyed your dawdle, Nora," added the latter personage; "next time you can keep mamma with you. She's in shocking form—only got a couple of brace, and one bird the Admiral shot, for a thousand, though he says his got away, and, of course, mother swallowed the fib."

Mrs. Brabazon laughed jollily. "We can't all manage our twenty brace, my dear Olive," she retorted; "but if I can't shoot, I can eat, and I feel as famishing as the Admiral looks."

"I'll go and find you a comfortable seat," said Nora quickly, and ran off, glad to escape from the piercing scrutiny that Olive Brabazon had been levelling alternately at Captain Lane and herself. The gallant officer followed, intent on securing a position next her at lunch.

"My dear lady," observed the broad-chested, rubicund member of the shooting party whose expression Mrs. Brabazon had commented on. "I may or may not look hungry, but there is no question that I am. And so would Millard be, if Miss Olive hadn't spoiled his appetite by letting Lane load for her."

"S-s-sh!" pleaded Mrs. Brabazon, glancing at her daughter, who had left them to join the subject of this jovial reference. "Olive doesn't comprehend banter, Admiral, and really Sir George is most sensitive where she is involved. But Fanshawe is opening the wine, and Captain Lane has paired off with Nora, so Sir George will be happy for a while."

"But—will—will Olive?" queried Admiral Vallis, as he escorted Mrs. Brabazon towards the luncheon cloth; "she is quite smitten with Ernest Lane, though he is in tow of Miss Nora, if I'm not losing my eyesight."

"Don't!—don't spoil my lunch, Admiral!" cried his hostess, "the girls are trouble enough as it is, for Olive has a temper and Nora is as high-spirited as you please. Olive will make my life a burden if she thinks she has reason to be jealous of Nora, though why she should beats me, for Sir George is a fine figure of a man, and has twice Lane's fortune. But there's an end of it, Admiral, for I'm ravenous, and one can't talk family affairs at an *al fresco* lunch."

She reached the impromptu table, flung herself down on a convenient hillock, and called for a glass of claret. The Admiral devoted himself to providing for her comfort with the ardour of a boy. Sir George Millard studied him frequently from where he sat with Olive Brabazon; he was a stalwart country gentleman, to whose chivalrous character his blue orbs and grave yet kindly mouth bore witness.

"The Admiral retains his old tenderness for your mother," he said at length; "forgive the question, but do you suppose anything will come of it. It would be, in all respects, a most suitable match, except that it might divert your mother's attention somewhat from you. But you will be leaving the Mains one of these days. Flowers such as you must be plucked and worn, Miss Brabazon." And the speaker's tone was full of meaning.

"Mamma likes her liberty," snapped Olive evasively, picking a wishbone with her white teeth; "the Admiral has been her friend and confidant for years. I believe he is the only one besides her who—who knows all about Nora."

"Is there some secret, then?" asked Sir George, his blue eyes lingering affectionately upon Olive, too affectionately to fathom the grimace of irritation that had distorted it when she mentioned the name of Nora Chisholm.

"Certainly there is," he was told; "she isn't any relation to us—we have no Chisholms in our family. Ten years ago she came to the school where I was being educated. Mamma had sent her. From that day to this she has been treated as my sister. This is everything I know, and everything Nora will confess to knowing. She says that mamma forbade her to speak of her childhood to anyone, even me. Nora promised and she is the sort of girl that holds to her promises. As for me, I hate secrets."

Sir George raised his brows, heavy and slightly grey, like his moustaches. "Poor little Nora!" he reflected, "then she is alone in the world, and yet so bright, so gentle, and, I should imagine, so proud."

Olive tossed off her glass of champagne. "If I *must* listen to Nora's praises," she declared, "I shall talk to Captain Lane, he is the chief of her worshippers."

She changed her position with sullen grace, to interrupt the conversation between Ernest Lane and the girl at whom she had been sneering.

"I have been telling Sir George," she said, "what a mystery you are, Nora." There was a spiteful ring in her clear tones—Captain Lane detected it.

"Surely gossip must have done that long ago, Miss Brabazon," he answered sternly; "was it worth while to revive a problem which cannot but be painful to Miss Chisholm, though it is of no importance to those who value her for herself alone."

Olive drew back, her dark pupils blazing with anger. Under her vicious though smiling thrust Nora Chisholm had raised her head as if in resentment. But at Ernest Lane's reply she coloured and her bosom rose and fell tempestuously. Discomfited, Olive turned away, and Nora stole a grateful glance at her defender.

"Thank you," she murmured, "I didn't think you knew. And yet I—I hoped you did."

Captain Ernest Lane started. "You hoped," he repeated, beneath his breath. "Nora, you don't mean you were afraid it might make any diff—oh, I've no right to say that. But you must have seen that I care for you. I'm a fool to choose this place for speaking out, but mystery or no mystery, whatever you may be or whatever you have been, I love you, Nora, love you for what you are, the sweetest, cleverest, prettiest, dearest girl in the world."

Nora was pretending to be busy with her plate. But

Digitized by Google

Try for our guinea post-card competition.

she flashed a look up at him that set the Captain's pulses beating like hammers. One of her small brown palms lay within Ernest Lane's reach, his fingers crept to it and clasped it. Nora Chisholm returned the clasp ever so lightly.

Neither of the lovers who had so impulsively arrived at an understanding evinced any further interest in the subject of luncheon. Their absorption in each other was remarked by all—by Mrs. Brabazon with anxiety, by Sir George Millard with satisfaction, by the Admiral with sly malice, by the servants with inquisitive sympathy, by Olive with a burning jealousy. Only she had observed that eager clasp which had revealed so much. She gnawed her lips in the bitterness of her misery; she had conceived an unreasoning passion for the young officer, a passion which he suspected as little as he reciprocated it.

Finally she sprang up, unable any further to endure the spectacle of Nora's happiness.

"Why do we ever lunch out!" she cried, "it is horribly uncomfortable, Admiral, mamma, Sir George, haven't you finished? It's no use asking Captain Lane and Nora—they have too much to talk about."

Mrs. Brabazon sighed, and, aided by the Admiral, abandoned her seat. "We go back with the launch, girls," she said, "and the men can have an hour or two of serious shooting, without a couple of amateurs to plague them. Though I suppose I oughtn't to call Olive an amateur after that twenty brace."

Colouring under Olive's direct attack, Nora had sprung lightly to her feet, avoiding Ernest Lane's offer to assist her. But her eyes met those of her lover and compensated him for her apparent coldness. The Admiral hallooed for the dogs and consulted with the keepers, while the other two men of the party loaded their guns.

Their hostess beckoned abruptly to her ally, the Admiral. "Take yourselves off," she ordered, "Olive is in a perfectly desperate mood about Lane and Nora—I must deal with her at once. The servants have to pack before the launch can leave, and we shall only waste your afternoon."

The Admiral bowed and bore off his companions tactfully. The three raised their hats, as they left the glade, followed by the dogs and the keepers.

Mrs. Brabazon turned to Nora. "Go and get a wrap from the launch, child," she said, "that muslin is far too thin for a north wind and an autumn day."

"You forget, mamma," intervened Olive bitterly, "Captain Lane admired it, and it must be worn at all costs."

Nora laughed. "Captain Lane only said," she retorted, "that it was charmingly old-fashioned. Would you be satisfied with a compliment of that sort?" And she ran down, singing, to the launch and the neighbouring back water. Mrs. Brabazon faced her daughter.

"Olive," she gasped, "have you lost all self-respect? Nora and you have grown up together, and yet because Captain Lane, who is nothing to you, chooses to show a fancy for her, you act like a tigress, or, what is the same species of animal, a jealous woman. Have you no dignity, no self-control?"

A twig cracked hard by, and he shrank into his species of bower to see saunter past a youthful Briton, his gun under his arm and his eyes bent upon his companion.

Olive Brabazon's answer was anticipated. A hand was laid arrestingly on her mother's shoulder, and the owner of the Mains beheld, standing at her side, the broken-down silk-hatted personage whom at an earlier juncture her first footman had warned off out of the glade. During the last few seconds he had been descending, with circumspect steps, from his willow screen on the farther bank of the river.

Mrs. Brabazon stared at him astonished. "You," she faltered, "I thought you were dead."

"Dead be——!" swore the other. "I'm alive right enough, and I want my child—my child Nora. She's in her minority and you can't keep her from me, Mrs. Brabazon. I can prove I never deserted her; you as good as stole her, you know you did, and I could prosecute you for it. Now am I going to have her back, am I going to be offered terms, or am I going to be nasty and consult my solicitor?"

The woman presented with this problem looked round—the servants had left the glade and were carrying the provision basket to the launch. "Why—why do you claim her," she stammered, shrinking from his menace, "what use can Nora be to you?"

Her threatener grinned. "She can help to support her loving father," he said; "she's the very thing for the stage. I've been watching her while the lot of you fed. A pretty face, a bright eye, a fetching smile, and thoroughbred manners. Come on, am I to have her, or am I to be bought off?"

Olive interrupted the debate—a fierce exultation in her young countenance. "So this is Nora's father!" she whispered, "I'm glad of it. But what reason could you possibly have for adopting her—for stealing her, if he speaks the truth. Of course you'll let her go; we can't have a scandal."

Mrs. Brabazon made an undecided gesture. "You don't know what you ask," she muttered. "I must have time to think. See, the servants are returning; what shall I do?"

The shabby stranger answered her query. "I'll look you up at the Mains to-night," he said; "you can have five or six hours to make up your mind, which, being a woman's, it'll probably need. I don't want a wrestling match with your—ahem!—your menials. *Au revoir.*"

He strolled away and crossed the bridge; the two footmen had seen him in parley with Mrs. Brabazon and surveyed his departing shape in utter amazement. Their mistress was wiping her fingers—moist with sudden perspiration—upon her lace handkerchief.

"The launch is ready, ma'am," she was informed. Mrs. Brabazon collected her scattered senses and linked her arm in that of her daughter.

"If you were different, Olive," she murmured, "my task would be easier, much easier." Then she added aloud, "tell the engineer we must reach home as quickly as possible."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Fanshawe, and, exchanging curious glances, the two servants followed her down to the waiting vessel.

CHAPTER II.

What Happened after Dark.

"Nora, dear, ask Captain Lane to spare you for a moment, I—I want your advice upon a little matter."

Ernest Lane rose from the palm-shaded corner where he sat with Nora Chisholm. Mrs. Brabazon—for it was she who had spoken—laid a plump white hand, the wrist of which was glittering with bracelets, upon the Captain's arm.

"You think me a nuisance, don't you, my dear fellow," she said, "but I don't suppose you are talking anything more important than natural history to Nora, and there is a choice which she must make at once if it is to be made at all. So you must pardon my carrying her off for a while."

"Certainly," answered the Captain, a trifle puzzled, and with a covert glance at Nora's bright face he sauntered off across the floor of the conservatory.

Mrs. Brabazon, too, looked at Nora—her own usually cheerful countenance was flushed and anxious, and she swept her black silk skirts round out of her way, to step closer to the girl who had been for so long her nominal daughter.

"You—you want me to make a choice, Mrs. Brabazon," ventured Nora; "what sort of choice—about a frock or—or a party?"

"You shall see," was the reply, "perhaps I ought to break it to you gently, but I haven't the heart. You've got a lot of pluck, Nora, though it's like mine—it won't keep. So I'm going to give you a shock, which I know you'll be equal to, providing I don't let you have time to think about it."

Thus chattering, as if to prevent any further questions on Nora's part, Mrs. Brabazon led her—a slender form in a gauzy evening gown of blue, through the winter garden to a small apartment between the conservatory and the hall, an apartment used both as a lounge and a museum. The Mains was a historic house, and in glass cases against the walls were pikes, swords, lances, daggers—armour and arms of a dozen periods.

The electric switches had been turned on, and in the glare of the pendants, his hat by him on a settee, lolled the person who, that morning, had accosted Mrs. Brabazon in the Wellam Woods.

Nora gazed at him, doubtful of his identity, yet vaguely alarmed. Suddenly the shabby figure started to its full height and with a melodramatic gesture, cried out: "Don't you know me, Nora, I am your father, Godfrey Chisholm!"

A frightened expression leapt into Nora's blue eyes, and she shrank towards Mrs. Brabazon. "I—I do remember you," she faltered, "years and years ago in a great dark house and up a lot of stairs, where I stayed with some poor people, you used to come and drink and swear, and—and say you wished I was dead."

Mrs. Brabazon drew the shivering girl into a protecting embrace, for Nora's cheeks were pale and her young tones strangely hesitating.

"Don't you be worried, dear," urged the elder woman, "he can do you no great harm now. But you're barely twenty, and the law allows him control of you till your majority. I'd fight him for you, but the truth is I didn't come by you quite straightforwardly. To forego his right to order you about for a year—until you're twenty-one—he asks ten thousand pounds, and as it happens I've put by ten thousand pounds for your dowry."

She patted Nora's fingers with tender sympathy, and regarded scornfully the other party to the interview.

"I needn't tell you that I'm not going to have you beggared by a piece of impudent bluff," pursued Mrs. Brabazon, "and as a law-suit would render you notorious, my advice is to go with him. If he neglects to maintain you or if he dares to treat you unkindly, communicate with my solicitors, and we will see how he

They were too late. The deserter, forcing himself free from his captor, poised the dagger and buried it in his heart.

appreciates the legal noose into which he has popped his head. Were I to bribe him into leaving you alone for the present, he could reappear in six months and repeat the process. So we will surrender you to him for a year, and much good may it do him. You shall meet with no harm, I'll take care of that."

Godfrey Chisholm scowled. "Don't think to stall me off that road, Mrs. Brabazon," he growled, "I'll give you the slip with the girl and see if you can discover our trail. You'll hardly expect me to believe you're fond of her when you won't stump up a little ready cash to keep her with you."

"Believe what you choose," he was advised, "you won't get me to part with Nora's dowry. Only the income from the estates is mine, and I'm a lavish spender. Olive is all right; she will step into the entail, so what I've saved I've saved for Nora. And she, and not you, shall have it. That's my decision."

"As you please," retorted Godfrey Chisholm; "so, Nora, you are my property at last. And, with Mrs. B.'s permission, we'll have a cosy talk—a pleasant *tête-à-tête* while your trunks are being packed."

He opened the door for Mrs. Brabazon to pass out, which she did, pausing to kiss Nora and whisper a sentence of consolation. The girl clung to her.

"I don't understand," murmured Nora bewilderingly, "why has he come back, and why, oh, why did you ever take me away from that terrible world if I must return to it again?"

The elder woman coloured. "Tut," she said under her breath, "a year is nothing, and I'll see you're comfortable. Credit me, darling, it is for the best." And, snatching another embrace, she slipped from the room.

Godfrey Chisholm put his hands in his trousers-pockets and confronted his daughter. "So you remember me," he snarled; "that's as well, you'll realise that I'm not to be played with. When you leave here to-night bring any jewellery and fal-lals you may have. We're going to be hard-up, deucedly hard-up. But I'll soon put you in the way of earning your own living and a trifle of mine, too."

Horrified by the savage determination of the visage that was thrust towards her, Nora recoiled, and, dropping into a seat, began to weep convulsively. At the height of her grief a voice reached her ear—it was that of Captain Ernest Lane. Another moment and he had entered the apartment.

"Well," he exclaimed, "and has Mrs. Brabazon finished with you. I saw that you had chosen this spot for your mysterious consultation—my darling!" he broke off, "what is the matter?" He stopped abruptly, to survey the insolent figure of Godfrey Chisholm.

"I—I beg your pardon," he said, addressing himself to Nora, "I thought you were alone. Shall I—shall I retire?"

Nora shook her head and brushed the blinding tears from her eyes. "No," she sobbed, "you had better know at once. Ernest, Captain Lane, this is my father—he was the terror of my childish life till Mrs. Brabazon rescued me, why she did so I never understood. But

Digitized by Google

before that I did not guess what happiness meant. And now he demands that he shall resume his legal authority over me. I must go away with him. You see what he is; I am not fit for the great honour you offered me—you are free. I—I release you from your promise."

A change had come over Godfrey Chisholm, he had clapped his hat on, pulled it over his brows, and assumed the most slouching attitude he could contrive to evolve from his long limbs and square shoulders.

Ernest Lane looked at him and a light sprang into the young officer's countenance; it grew stern and commanding. He took a stride to Godfrey Chisholm and seized him by the collar.

"I see," he said harshly, "you want your legal rights over this innocent girl. Since you wish for law, you shall have it—military law. Godfrey Chisholm, I recognise you as James Seymour, otherwise 'Gentleman Jim,' of B Company, in the first battalion of the Wessex Regiment, who deserted in South Africa at the beginning of the war, after treacherously killing his senior major, whom he bore a grudge. What rights have you, Godfrey Chisholm, *alias* Seymour, except to be tried by court-martial, and—"

Ernest Lane stopped; after all, he was in the presence of the woman he loved, and the man before him was her father. He could not complete his question by indicating the dread fate of the soldier who murders his comrade or his superior officer.

Godfrey Chisholm turned to bay. "Curse you," he hissed, "it's a trap. But I'll break through it. Stand back, Captain Lane, or I shall do you a mischief."

The Captain hesitated; what would Nora think of him if he were the means of bringing her father to the fate which he so richly deserved. While he meditated, dragged one way by duty and another by affection, the deserter darted past him towards the window. There was a rattle of curtain-rings, a click as he unhasped the French casement, a footstep on the veranda, and Godfrey Chisholm was gone.

Not sorry to be saved the trouble of a decision, and willing to allow the deserter time to make good his escape, Ernest Lane turned to Nora and would have taken her into his arms. But she repulsed him tremulously.

"All is over between us, Ernest," she said, putting her hand to her throbbing bosom; "I was a nobody before—I am worse than a nobody now. I am the daughter of a deserter from your own regiment—a deserter, and, if I understood your terrible words, worse than a deserter. I wish I had never crossed your path."

"I won't give you up, Nora," answered her lover whitely. "I can't lose you, you are mine for ever."

"In heart, yes," murmured Nora pitifully, "but nothing more. Don't be cruel, dear," she begged. "I am doing what is right. You saved me from him; thank heaven you were able to save me. And I must save you, your position, your reputation."

She would have slipped by him but there was an interruption. A figure sprang in at the window—the figure of Godfrey Chisholm.

"A constable is guarding the gate," he gasped, closing the curtains behind him, "and there are others round the house. I've been spotted by the local police—curse my luck; who'd have thought it in this sleepy hole? But I won't be taken—I won't be taken!"

He was unnerved and his teeth were chattering. Ernest Lane glanced irresolutely from the deserter to his daughter, and back again from the girl to the man. Godfrey Chisholm's gaze was wandering about the room as if seeking a chance to escape; his eyes rested on one of the glass cases. It was full of small steel weapons—short swords and daggers of twenty patterns. The deserter—galvanised into life—bounded to it, dashed his foot through the protecting pane and caught down a dagger of the Tudor period, heavy-handled, razor-edged. Nora screamed and Ernest Lane flung himself upon the ex-soldier.

"Let me be, Captain," whispered Godfrey Chisholm; "it's for myself I want it. It's easier than the rope or the bullet, and less fuss. Don't grip me like that, you fool—curse you, I will do it."

Nora's cry had brought a group from the conservatory, Olive and Sir George, the Admiral and Mrs. Brabazon. Olive smiled ferociously; she recognised Godfrey Chisholm in the Captain's antagonist, and, satisfied that the exposure which she had so keenly desired was in progress, drew her yellow silk gown about her and studied the scene from the door.

The Admiral had leapt to Ernest Lane's assistance and, in the same moment, the window-curtains were flung wide, and a police-sergeant appeared, escorted by a couple of constables.

They were too late. The deserter, forcing himself free of his captor, poised the dagger and buried it in his heart. Nora covered her face and fainted—in Ernest Lane's arms.

* * * * *

That night, while the servants sat up to gossip nervously, while the Admiral and Sir George Millard smoked innumerable cigars in the conservatory, while Olive Brabazon brooded gloomily in her room—Godfrey Chisholm slept the last sleep in the apartment where he had so unexpectedly found means to take his own life. Upstairs, in her boudoir, Mrs. Brabazon was revealing to Nora and Ernest Lane the mystery which had united the dead man and her.

"My mother, poor soul, married again soon after my wedding," she said, "and this dangerous wastrel was your father, Nora. Not that you've a drop of his blood in your body, dear, you're my precious mother every inch of you. When you were a few years old she died—impoverished and miserable and in hiding, even from me. I lost sight of you and your father, and not till you were ten years old did I discover and practically kidnap you. As your father was paying for your maintenance—doubtless hoping to profit by you when you grew up—I was breaking the law, and so had to keep my conduct secret. Your father did suspect me and came down here on a furlough—he had joined the army by then; but I sent you away and put him off the scent. How he got on to it at last is more than I can tell. But you see, the truth of the mystery is this—that you are really my own dear little step-sister."

"And my future wife," added Captain Ernest Lane. Nora blushed and smiled, for the cloud had lifted from her sun and the sky of her young life was blue once more.

"By the way," remarked Mrs. Brabazon casually, some months after, "Sir George asked my permission this evening to put a certain question to Olive. You may be sure she will say 'Yes' when I tell her that Nora is to be Mrs. Lane so soon."

"And you will be left alone at the Mains," said Nora softly, stroking her newly-found sister's hand.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Brabazon, "I shall actually have to marry the Admiral!"

Mr. H. T. Johnson writes our next serial. See Editor's Page.

Digitized by Google

BUDDAH'S RUBY.

THE fact of the matter is, Herbert, that I daren't propose to your sister."

"Why, not, Charlie, old man?" queried Herbert Langdale. "Why not? Take my tip, old boy, and do; for—mark you, I am giving away a confidence—she loves you."

Charlie Woodleigh's face flushed with pleasure.

"Let us see if Frascati's champagne rivals that of the Savoy or 'Jimmy's,' and let us drink the health of yours cheerily on the strength of your statement. Waiter! Roederer '87, if you please." Then, as the waiter vanished to execute his order, he turned his head wearily to his friend, exclaiming: "It is useless for me to tell you how I love your sister. But, to be candid with you, Bert, there is an impediment in the way which debars my proposing."

"An impediment? What the dickens do you mean, man?" exclaimed Langdale in surprise, stopping eating to look scrutinisingly at his friend. "Explain yourself, Charlie. By jove, if you have been trifling with Ethel's feelings towards——. Sorry, old chap, I forgot that you are not a cad, for you love her every whit as much as she does you. Is——"

"Hush, old man. I'll tell you what the impediment is," interrupted Woodleigh hastily, glancing round the spacious hall. "Here comes the waiter with the champagne."

Frascati's was nearly empty, it being only just seven-thirty, thus it came about that Charlie Woodleigh, the reticent, came to talk of his private affairs in such a public place.

"You are perfectly right, old boy, when you say I am not such a cad as to trifle with Ethel's love," he said in a low voice, after the waiter had retired. "I am not. Yet at times I almost curse the day when you first introduced me to her. For her sake, old man, not for mine. Were I sure of living over this month, I——"

"Is there anything, save natural disease, to prevent your doing so?" queried Langdale in surprise.

"I am a marked man, I fear," muttered Woodleigh gloomily. "I am one of six, under ban of death."

"How the dickens did you get so?" exclaimed Herbert in amazement. "What arrant cant you're talking."

"It is neither cant nor bosh," replied Woodleigh gloomily; then he added a short laugh, "I wish to Heaven it were. Five years ago, as you know, I was with the 53rd out in the Punjaub, and I belonged to a click of six, comprising four lieutenants and two captains, viz., Wilson, Luic, myself, Anstruther, and Seymore-Leyton. A rowdier crew than us six it is difficult to imagine. We got into hot water at Madras, brought the regiment into bad odour at Lucknow, and our final freak at Simla caused me to sell my commission. Luic was the head of our clique, being ably seconded by Seymore-Leyton, and it was owing to the latter's suggestion that we determined to appropriate Buddah's ruby, and thus shatter the priest's boast for ever."

"What boast?"

"Ah, true, I forgot to tell you. In the environs of Simla there is a Buddist chapel, or rather temple, and on the idol's finger was a massive ring of rudely chased gold, in which a gigantic ruby was set. The boast was that two thousand years ago Buddah descended from the Heavens and placed this ring on the image's finger as a proof of his good favour, leaving a note to the effect that it should never be stolen. It was a mad freak, for the temple was always guarded by priests, but the said freak was proposed under the influence of fizz at mess one night. Someone dared us, and we carried the thing through, replacing the ring the following night.

"We thought we had managed the thing very cutely, for beyond the shindy which lasted for a day when the ring was discovered to be missing, nothing more of the.

Try for our guinea post-card competition.

Digitized by Google

matter was heard for some time. We divided the stakes, and talked big of daring anything. The ring business was forgotten till a year passed ; then on the very night our escapade occurred Seymore-Leyton was discovered transfixed to the heart, with a *dagh* bearing the legend, 'Buddah the outraged needs him !'

"Detectives tried a year to elucidate the matter, but in vain. Once more the fatal date came round, and Anstruther failed to turn up at mess. Going to his bungalow, we found him lying on the verandah, his throat discoloured by purple finger marks. He was quite dead, a scroll pinned on his jacket by a thorn detailed enigmatically that :

"'Buddah the outraged needs him !'

"A gloom fell over our mess, bets were taken as to who next was doomed. I was the favourite, but Luic was discovered in the jungle killed by a tiger, the fatal scroll being tightly held in his hand. Wilson died by snake bite on the fatal day, Branstone expired from black jack at Aden also on the 8th of November, and each had a scroll beside them detailing that Buddah required their presence. Are you then surprised that I am superstitious enough to consider myself a doomed man ?"

Langdale smiled awkwardly, then drank his champagne.

"Quite a romantic tale," he remarked at length.

"A sight too romantic to please me," muttered Woodleigh moodily.

"What is this mysterious date ?"

"The 8th of November."

"To-day, in fact ?"

"Precisely. If I live past twelve to night I may consider myself safe for a year, who knows, perhaps for life, for the emissary of death will only strike on the fatal date," replied Langdale gloomily. "You might do me a favour, old man, and stay the evening with me."

"Certainly. Buck up, old man, and be like me, not believing odd coincidences. You're nervous ; pay the waiter, and let's go."

A few minutes later the two men found themselves on the pavement of Oxford Street. A drizzle had just commenced to fall, causing a dank feeling in the atmosphere. Woodleigh shivered as he glanced at the dripping pavement and the moisture-soaked mackintosh of the policeman, who stood beside one of the restaurant's electric lamp-posts.

"Cab !" cried Charlie peremptorily ; and in obedience to the command the porter hailed a hansom from the neighbouring cab rank.

"Where to, sir ?" queried the man.

"Gaiety !" replied Langdale.

A few moments later they were bowling rapidly towards the theatre.

"Beastly night !" muttered Woodleigh, lighting a cigarette and offering his companion one. "Somewhat rough having to wind up one's affairs at twenty-eight, but there's one consolation, the night is a fitting one in which to make my exit from the world."

"Nonsense !" murmured Langdale softly, endeavouring to light his cigarette and failing. "If you are going to be so pessimistical, I shall regret having come with you. Give me a light off yours. Thanks, awfully !"

The rest of the drive was passed in silence, broken once only by a smothered curse from Woodleigh, as the horse slipped on the greasy pavement in the Charing Cross Road.

The "Circus Girl" had commenced when they arrived as the Gaiety, a fact which did not trouble Charlie in the slightest. He was not comic operatically inclined that evening, his mind continually wandering to a certain Buddist temple in the environs of Simla.

He saw the piece from beginning to end with unseeing eyes, and at its close glanced at his watch. It was a quarter-past eleven.

"Three-quarters of an hour will decide my fate."

"Judge ! Come to the bar and have a sherry cobler to steady your nerves before going home," replied Langton, gaily.

Woodleigh assented, and together they adjourned next door for the required refreshment.

At a quarter to twelve Langton suggested a move.

"All right, I'm game !" replied Woodleigh, with a ghost of a smile. "I'm somewhat peckish. I think I shall drop in at 'Jimmy's' for a snack. Will you come ?"

"Certainly !" answered Herbert, flinging down a coin, then linking his arm through Woodleigh's he left the building, and hailed a passing hansom.

"Ten minutes more to safety !" exclaimed Woodleigh, leaning back in the cab. "By Jove, I am beginning to breathe again."

The rain was commencing to fall fairly fast, dropping with angry splashes against the roof and windows of the cab.

Suddenly the cab halted, and Langdale poked his stick up through the trap to enquire the cause.

"There's a horse down," replied the cabby. "One of Pickford's and the cart has bursted its axle. We shan't be a moment, sir, before we get on."

He civilly raised the glass in front to show his passengers the cause of the stoppage.

Langdale leaned out to get a clearer view, when suddenly he felt his arm gripped by Woodleigh.

"For God's sake, man, look at the off-side window !"

Langdale did as he was bid, and beheld the face of a Hindoo flattened against the window pane. The side lamp illumined its sinister features, the eyes danced with triumphant hate, its lips being drawn over its fang-like, betel-stained teeth in a kind of wolfish grin. It was an evil face, of a truly diabolical cast.

Involuntarily Langdale cowered back ; the same instant a lank arm darted into the cab, to be instantly withdrawn, a smothered groan following the action.

"Done, by Jove !" gasped Woodleigh, sinking back into the cab. "Love——"

A shuddering gasp, and all was over. Horror-struck Langdale swung open the doors, and, indicating the Hindoo who was wriggling through the crowd, dashed into the road, shouting :

"Stop him !"

But like an eel he evaded all his would-be captors, and darted like a shot down Wellington Street.

"What is the matter, sir ?" queried a constable, pushing his way toward the infuriated Langdale "Has he robbed you ?"

"Robbed ? No, worse than that ; he has murdered my friend !"

A few constables by chance were luckily at hand to keep back the surging crowd, while the first policeman entered the hansom.

Langdale was right. The tiny hilt of a small dagger stuck out from Woodleigh's shirt front, whilst tied to its handle was a tiny scroll, on which ran the legend in Hindoo characters :

"*Buddah the outraged needs him.*"

"Adventures of an Actress" still going strong.

Digitized by Google

The Golden Dwarf

A Sensational Romance of To-Day.

By R. NORMAN SILVER.

Author of "A Keeper of Secrets," "Hate, the Destroyer," "A Daughter of Mystery," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS OF "GOLDEN DWARF."

"It is the body of Sir Christopher Dering!"

The words are spoken by a pretty girl—fair-haired, blue-eyed. She stands, horrified, by a grass-grown ditch in a country lane, out of which a great mastiff is climbing. The ditch contains the corpse of a stalwart man—a handkerchief bound over his mouth and nostrils.

Close to there is a strange figure, graceful, well-dressed, even handsome, but with the stature of a boy and the face of an adult. He carries a heavy dog-whip, and stares, fixedly, at the dead body just discovered by his mastiff, Cerberus.

The girl is Esther Carew; the dwarf, Otto Hare, the richest landowner in Derbyshire, and the mystery of Wyrksdale, a village in that county. For the first time in fifteen years he has set foot in a public thoroughfare, to attract the attention of Esther, whom he has watched from his park.

Sir Christopher Dering was alive at seven o'clock the preceding day. He and his nephew, Felix, had quarrelled over the latter's love for Esther. Sir Christopher wanted Felix to make a good marriage—the birth of his little cousin Brian has put him out of the succession to the baronetcy. Felix is faithful to the penniless Esther Carew.

Much turns on the whereabouts of Felix on the night before. It appears that he was in Duchester, some miles off, whither he went on business, and spent a night at the theatre. Could he have killed the squire?

Felix in vain protests his innocence.

But the cloud of suspicion gathers around him. Meantime, the child Brian has been kidnapped, and Felix is suspected of this too. He discovers a riding whip with some peculiar marks upon it.

One day an old sailor named Foley is attacked by Otto Hare's dogs.

Kraft is summoned to dress the wound, and gives Foley a draught, which results in his death.

Judith Garland resumes her threats against Dering, who replies by saying he knows the guilty parties.

Geddes discovers from analysis that Kraft poisoned Foley, but is trapped and captured by unknown gaolers.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Light in the Crimson Globe.

Archibald Geddes, launched into sudden darkness, and clutched, neck and elbows, by two pairs of powerful hands, remained passive, awaiting events. The great dogs on the further side of the small strong portal howled and bellowed alternately. His captors paid no heed to them, but exchanged a few rapid sentences in an alien tongue, which, from its guttural tones and half-familiar syllables, Geddes took to be German.

A moment elapsed while this council was being held, the chemist's assistant lying meantime, practically strangled, against a couple of tall bodies, one soft and bulky, the other hard and lean. Then a soft bandage was slipped across his eyes and Geddes felt himself thrust forward.

A few seconds later he experienced a curious sensation, as if he were being half hauled, half pushed, down some well-like aperture. This achieved, with the sound of disengaging locks and bars, he was thrust forward again.

As he went he contrived to swing an arm, as if accidentally—his fingers encountered an upright surface—it was rough, irregular, and cold to the touch. The Scotchman knew it for hewn rock.

Presently his guides halted and Geddes heard the click of a latch. Again he was urged on and sent staggering by a vigorous push, just as the noise of the latch came once more. He lurched, and fell on to some smooth, slightly warm, level. With a quick movement he dragged off the wrapping which blindfolded him—it seemed to be a silk handkerchief.

Archibald Geddes stared about him—he was in a black gloom, profound and apparently impenetrable, through which there yet stole, from a distant quarter, the dim throbbing he had heard on the exterior of the tower. In it was mingled an odd sound, resembling the hiss of an angry serpent, combined with the spitting of a fretful cat.

As he gazed into vacuity, the nothingness about him was flooded with light and he saw that he was in a narrow, yet high apartment, evidently a species of dungeon, rock-hewn, concreted, windowless, but heated by some invisible agency, and lighted by a single electric lamp in the centre of the high ceiling.

This lamp was not an incandescent—the variety usually employed in illuminating rooms of moderate size—but an arc, of rather diminutive proportions, yet considerable intensity. Its occasional sigh and splutter was the snake-like murmur he had noticed. But the globe that enclosed it was neither transparent nor opaline—as are generally the glass containers of electric lamps, it was clouded, and red, blood red. Archibald Geddes found himself in an atmosphere of crimson.

On either side of the lamp, which was quite out of reach, opened a couple of apertures, doubtless those of ventilators. The room was unfurnished, save for a shallow metal box, filled with soiled cotton-wool.

From this the Scotchman shrank instinctively—feeling as if it might contain some noxious animal or venomous serpent, to gratify whose deadly appetite he had been flung into that strange cell. But the peculiar receptacle was motionless and Geddes satisfied himself, by a rapid inspection, of its emptiness.

He was occupied by his investigations when the whine of a hinge brought him to the right-about. An elephantine figure had entered the place, a figure with small yellow eyes and spectacles which glittered in the crimson flare. Archibald Geddes' visitor was the foreign physician, Dr. Joseph Kraft.

The German surveyed his captive, pursing his thin lips and folding his arms. Almost concealed by his pink palms, Geddes caught the ominous glint of a revolver. Joseph Kraft was on his guard.

You won't forget to get a new reader, will you?

Digitized by Google

"So, my friend," he observed, "you are cursed with an instinct for prowling, and you come to me to be cured. Your confidence flatters my professional ability."

Geddes twisted his moustache. "They laugh best that laugh last," he retorted drily; "but allow me, as I am here, to compliment you on the skill and address with which you—ahem!—cured Foley, of his inquisitiveness."

Kraft grinned a satanic grin. "I did not guess you had probed me that deeply," he retorted; "you are an antagonist worthy of my steel."

"Of your bullet, you mean," corrected Geddes; "as for your poison—the one which finished Foley—I showed its effects to Inspector Brasher. A little white precipitate—a dead mouse; he was most interested. You see I sampled the poisoned mixture before it was too late."

The German's saffron pupils flashed. "You try my patience, Mr. Geddes," he said, "but I will do you the justice to make my proposition formally. It can be put into five words—a truce or a grave. Choose, my friend, the blue sky is a pretty thing and the little Fräulein at the High Street has lips like a freshly-blown rose. You are young, and death is for the old. Will you swear, in terms I shall dictate, to persecute me no more, and to pluck up any seeds of suspicion you have sown in the bull-mind of Brasher, or will you meet a fate which I promise you shall be no easy one?"

His teeth bared themselves to the gums as he spoke, and the red shimmer on his glasses lent his orbs the dilated fury of a wild beast's.

Archibald Geddes retreated to the wall. "I will not swear any such thing," he declared; "you are a dangerous villain, Dr. Kraft, and, to my knowledge, a callous murderer. Keep your distance from me, I, too, am armed!" And the Scotchman thrust a hand into his jacket-pocket.

Alarmed by the gesture, Joseph Kraft recoiled. Darting to the door, he drew it ajar and slid through it with surprising agility. The chemist's assistant laughed—in spite of himself.

The next second the smile faded from his face—the light in the crimson globe was dying away.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"You Shall See the Child."

"You might send my horse to the Duchester Arms, Mr. Tarporley; tell them I am called to London, and ask them to keep him for a day or two. I must catch this train."

The station-master at the somnolent Duchester depôt looked inquiringly at Felix Dering's boots and spurs, and at the riding-whip he held.

"With pleasure, sir," was his answer; "have you a bag?—she'll be away in a minute."

"No, thanks," said Felix, "I'm taking an unexpected run up—on business." He spoke inattentively, his gaze—as he stood within the shelter of the tiny booking-hall—was fixed upon a couple conversing at some distance. One of the figures was tall and stout, the other spare and of medium height. They were Kraft and Neal Garland.

Mr. Tarporley, a trifle puzzled by Felix Dering's abstraction, returned to his professional duties, and shouted a word of stimulus to the porters at the luggage vans. The guard hurried to and fro, bustling the passengers into their compartments. Neal Garland entered a third, Joseph Kraft hovering about him with vigilant politeness.

"Hadn't you better step aboard, sir?" suggested the station-master, deferentially; "she's as good as off."

Felix nodded—he noticed that at the moment the clumsy frame of the German presented to him a view of its rear elevation. He pulled his hat over his brows, strode across the platform, and waving a farewell to the curious Mr. Tarporley, leapt into a carriage.

A discordant shriek rent the air, the guard was signalling to the driver of the engine. Felix drew the curtain a few inches and leant into the corner. The motion was scarcely completed when the train bore him—thus screened—past the bland and meditative visage of Joseph Kraft; it was wrinkled by a satisfied smile.

The express cleared the platform and traversed a bend; Felix Dering could see the front of the drowsy depôt, where his chestnut fidgeted in charge of a porter. Then the growing velocity of the train whisked him out of the line of sight, and the express, swerving to the south, the little town of Duchester disappeared.

At Derby Felix got out and stole along the crowded platform to the neighbourhood of the compartment tenanted by Neal Garland. Not till the train, with a volley of coughs, began to move, did Felix Dering stride to the door, near which he was lounging, and gain the compartment at a bound. Save for Neal it was empty, and that gentleman, feet up and hat off, lolled full-length on a seat.

Felix deposited himself unconcernedly on the opposite cushions; the express was settling to its monotonous clank and roar. For a second Neal did not abandon his newspaper. When he did it was to stare, astounded, at the vision before him.

"Mr. Neal Garland," said Felix; "I am, as you may or may not know, Felix Dering. I have tracked you from Wyresdale, which you left about three o'clock this afternoon, for the purpose of obtaining some sort of interview. As it happens, we find ourselves alone, and need not defer our talk until we reach London."

"You—you are in error," was the sullen retort; "I am not the person you name. You are misled by some fancied resemblance."

"Am I?" said Felix, "you shall be the judge. You were at Dering House several hours ago, and had a private consultation with Miss Judith Garland. From Dering House you proceeded to Wyresdale Park. Thence you were driven, by Mr. Otto Hare, to the Rosery, Mrs. Carew's residence. Dr. Kraft accompanied you. From the Rosery Dr. Kraft and you came on to Duchester in Mr. Hare's dog-cart, driven by his groom. *En route* you paid a visit to the Wheatsheaf Hotel. Twenty minutes back you bade adieu to Dr. Kraft at Duchester station."

"Spy!" hissed Neal Garland, and swinging round, darted his lean fingers towards his right boot. An instant more and Felix beheld a dark-blue, pointed rod of steel, the thickness of a stout straw, and having a slender wooden haft. It was a true stiletto, and Neal grasped it in practised fashion—the top of the haft in his palm, the cruel spike inclined upward and forward. A prick from it in liver or heart, and the recipient, though he may live for hours, is a dead man.

Felix lashed out with his riding-whip. All the force of a trained athlete went to the blow, and it fell upon Neal Garland's wrist. The stiletto tinkled to the floor of the compartment, and Felix planted a foot on it.

"Curse you, curse you, curse you!" yelped Neal, under his breath, and a flood of blasphemy poured form his lips as he clutched his injured arm. Felix kicked the stiletto under the bench and towered over his vanquished enemy.

"Sit down," he ordered, "and hear what I have to say to you. Rebel by speech or action and I will pull the communication-cord, show the guard your dastardly weapon, and give you in charge at St. Pancras."

Neal gnashed his teeth, but obeyed, his black orbs blazing, and his face livid. Felix mounted guard—a watchful sentinel, for much in addition to his own safety was at stake.

Try for our guinea post-card competition.

Digitized by Google

"I—I have a slight clue to report to your ladyship," he said, "not a great deal, but hopeful so far as it goes. It may ultimately get us on the track of poor little Sir Brian."

"What have you done with the child Brian?" he demanded, abruptly.

His prisoner sneered. "So you *were* eavesdropping, you low hound!" he commented.

"Chance brought me to the library," said Felix; "a happy chance, as it proved. Answer my question, if you do not wish to inspect an English gaol. What did you do with Sir Brian Dering after you took him from your sister?"

Neal smote his right fist angrily into his left hand. "A thousand furies tear her," he muttered; "so she has split! But I'll pay her, ay, and you, too, Dering—murderer as you are. I saw you at the cross-roads that night—my evidence may serve to give *you* a taste of gaol, if not of something worse."

"You saw me," retorted Felix Dering; "because I was there. Nor are you the single witness to the fact, which I have never specifically denied. I was not asked at the inquest if I had returned to Wyresdale that evening. The thought of—of others prevented my volunteering the information. But do not imagine I defend myself to you—you who were there, also, since you claim to have seen me."

"Perhaps," rejoined Neal, with a frightened grin, "perhaps you mean to insinuate that I committed the murder?"

"Not I," declared Felix; "I am aware that you did not—for I know who did. Though my knowledge does not exclude your having been an accessory. That, however, I am willing to waive. My uncle's death and its mysteries apart, will you tell me, or will you not, the whereabouts of the child Brian?"

The meagre features of Neal Garland contracted reflectively. He was in a tight place and he perceived it. "On terms, yes," he said.

Felix frowned. "I am not able to offer you any considerable bribe," was his objection; "yet if you can produce the child without delay, I will raise you by hook or by crook, a couple of hundred."

Neal gesticulated irritably. "I haven't time to wait for the bill-discounters," he replied; "I want nothing from you but an opportunity to sling my hook, to get out of England."

"Once I have the child," said Felix, "you shall be given that opportunity. But either I learn its whereabouts before we leave this carriage or, at the next station, I instruct the guard to wire for police to meet the train at St. Pancras. Your stiletto and that bruise made by my whip will be evidence enough to justify an arrest for inquiries. You should be best able to decide if those inquiries will be satisfactory, or the reverse."

A grimmer scowl than ever distorted Neal's countenance. "I can't tell you where the kid is," Felix was informed, "but when we reach London I'll take you to a party that can. And if that isn't sufficient you'll have to go without the brat till the stroke of doom. For you won't ever spot it on your own."

Felix weighed the proposition. He might be risking his life in accepting the ultimatum stated by Neal. He did not like the ring of the phrase "I'll take you." But

Digitized by Google

there seemed no alternative—he fathomed the depth of the void which had swallowed up Brian. It might well be that neither professional nor amateur detective would trace the child unaided. Also it was worth venturing much to solve the enigma of his baby cousin's abduction—the abduction that slung so blightingly a shadow over his own honour. He sprang to a resolution.

"Convince me I am at least on the track of the child," said Felix; "and that you have told me all you can and I will allow you twenty-four hours' grace before calling in the aid of the police."

Neal threw himself back at his ease. "Good!" he exclaimed; "so we're agreed." And he commenced to roll and light a cigarette.

Amazed, Felix contemplated the lolling form of the man who had passed so cooly from attempted violence to cynical indifference. He began to comprehend the singular blend of weakness, cunning, and ferocity that represented Neal Garland's character. Forewarned, he fell to weaving plans which might protect him against the treachery which he felt sure Neal was designing. Yet he determined to run every risk for the sake of the hapless child who—it was only too probable—had been delivered to some heartless or brutal custodian.

Not for an hour did he break the silence, and then it was to put a question. "Why did you take the child away?" he asked.

"Part of the game," snapped Neal; "we wanted to milk you of the Dering shekels, and we knew they wouldn't be yours while the kid was round. So we nipped the brat off to let you slip into the cash. When the cry had died down we should have provided proofs of its death and forced you to go to the courts for your inheritance. Then we'd have squared accounts. It was Judith's idea—pretty, don't you think?"

"Forced me, how?" inquired Felix Dering, with a shudder. He had evidently not been mistaken in his view of the woman who had pursued him so desperately, driven by an affection as fierce as it was unfeminine. She had lied to him throughout, subtly, ingeniously, temptingly. Thank heaven he had never wavered in his allegiance to Esther. Her girlish love and loyalty lent a terrible contrast to Judith's duplicity and passion.

Neal chuckled. "By threatening to accuse you of Sir Christopher's murder," was his reply: "I'd seen you at the cross-roads, and besides, we'd found that bit of your chain—a nasty piece of evidence, Mr. D., in spite of your 'I know who committed the crime.' But you've out-bluffed me, and I don't wish to deny it."

The speaker's mouth quivered, and his nostrils dilated. It was hard to say if his mood were the more humorous or vindictive. He devoted his attention to the rolling of countless cigarettes, and thus, with tobacco and occasional bursts of noiseless laughter, he beguiled the journey to the Metropolis.

At St. Pancras Felix instructed him to descend first and was thereby enabled to pick up the stiletto, which he had secured under his foot in readiness for the move. He slid it unobserved into his sleeve.

Neal evinced no desire to escape, but hailed a four-wheeler, entered it, thrust his hand out to give the driver an address in Pimlico, and sat back for Felix to join him in the vehicle.

When they were opposite one another, and the cab in motion, Neal prepared his twentieth cigarette.

"Excuse my chartering a four-wheel," he said, "but I knew it would be more soothing to you if you could keep me under observation—a hansom, in that respect, is less convenient than a growler."

As he lit the finished cigarette his shoulders shook with the species of suppressed merriment which had agitated him on the way south. Felix studied him, sombrely.

The cab drew up at the lodging-house of Mrs. Schwartz while the quarter after ten o'clock was still chiming from Westminster. The small servant opened to them. Neal paused on the pavement till Felix had paid the fare, then stalked up the steps, pushed the girl aside, and led Felix to the upper floor where Joseph Kraft had parleyed so effectively with Keturah Schwartz and her privileged lodger.

At the top of the flight Neal halted. "I've to talk over rather a shrewd sort of woman," he said, "and you'll have to let me tackle the job alone. This is the only exit to the room, as you can assure yourself by a peep in, and we're on the first storey, so I can't jump out. I suppose you would just as soon do sentry-go here and fix your eye on the mouse-trap."

He threw wide the door, and Felix, glancing in, beheld, dozing in a padded chair near a smoky lamp, an enormously fat woman, whose double chin caressed her ample bosom, and whose red cheeks glowed with perspiration. Neal had evidently been truthful—there were no further doors to the chamber. With a lifted finger, Neal himself tip-toed over the threshold and shut Felix Dering out.

For some while Felix listened to the murmur of voices, Neal's soft and persuasive, a second one fretful yet husky. The house above and beneath the landing where he stood was quiet, and the rattle of an infrequent cab without penetrated dimly to his ear. He clutched the stiletto that was hidden in his sleeve and waited.

At length the door swung inwards, and the fat woman rolled out. Not deigning to cast a glance upon him, she swept by and vanished into a room on the rear of the landing. Neal had followed her to the threshold of the parlour.

"Come in, Mr Dering," he said; "I've won—after a fight. If you'll make yourself comfortable in here for an hour or so, you shall see not only the child but the person in whose charge it is. When we have had a clear two days' grace, the kid shall be formally delivered to you—in Wyresdale; you yourself will leave London to-night. Those are the lowest terms Keturah will agree to, and I can't blame her caution."

Felix walked into the apartment, looking keenly about him for possible dangers, and noting casually the shabby comfort and close odour of the room. He chose his seat in a corner that commanded the whole chamber, and settled himself to watch every movement of his companion.

"As for me," went on Neal, "I've a letter or two to write. I shall skip as soon as you're satisfied. No more England for me. Hark!"

He raised his hand; the sound of a heavy and descending tread shook the stairs near to.

"Yes," he added; "that is Keturah—she's off to fetch Sir Brian Dering and his—his temporary guardian. There is a late *Star*, I see, and it may beguile your leisure while I work."

Neal's tone was polite, his bearing oddly sarcastic. He peered from the window as the shrill call of a cab-whistle sounded in the street.

"Keturah is taking a hansom," he announced; "now we shan't be long, and I must get to my correspondence."

He brought pen, ink, and paper and sat down to write busily. From time to time his shoulders were shaken by the species of restrained merriment that had so perplexed Felix in the train.

Felix Dering, ignoring the offer of an evening journal, maintained upon Neal Garland the determined scrutiny of a hawk. A finger and a thumb, thrust into his sleeve, kept the stiletto at hand. So the moments crept by.

Mr. H. T. Johnson writes our next serial. See Editor's Page.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Of Course, the Scent is Cold."

"Will you step this way, please; her ladyship will see you in a moment."

Inspector Brasher removed his stiff peaked cap and crossed the hall towards the flight of carved oak stairs which led to the smaller rooms of Dering House. Keeping at the footman's heels, he reached a dainty boudoir, upholstered in blue and white, and looking on the quaint old terrace with its stone bulustrades. A bright fire cooed on the wide hearth, and a Persian kitten dozed in its basket at the end of the brass kerb. The prospect outside was brown and desolate—the autumn had set in still and raw.

Michael Brasher glanced about him, appreciating with characteristic deliberation, the elegance of his unwonted surroundings. As he gazed a pair of folding-doors at the further extremity of the apartment were opened, and Judith Garland appeared, supporting the unsteady figure and slow steps of Lady Dering.

Clad in black, deeply bordered with crape, Stella Dering seemed to have attained, in the last few months, a premature middle-age. She wore the widow's cap and bands, but even without them she would have been stamped by the impress of her crushing sorrow. Her cheeks were thin and her eyes dilated, while the dark hair on her temples was sown with silver threads that answered to the lines on her brow.

Mr. Brasher saluted respectfully. Judith aided her charge to a sofa near the hearth, and then passed, as though to fetch a cushion, before the stalwart inspector.

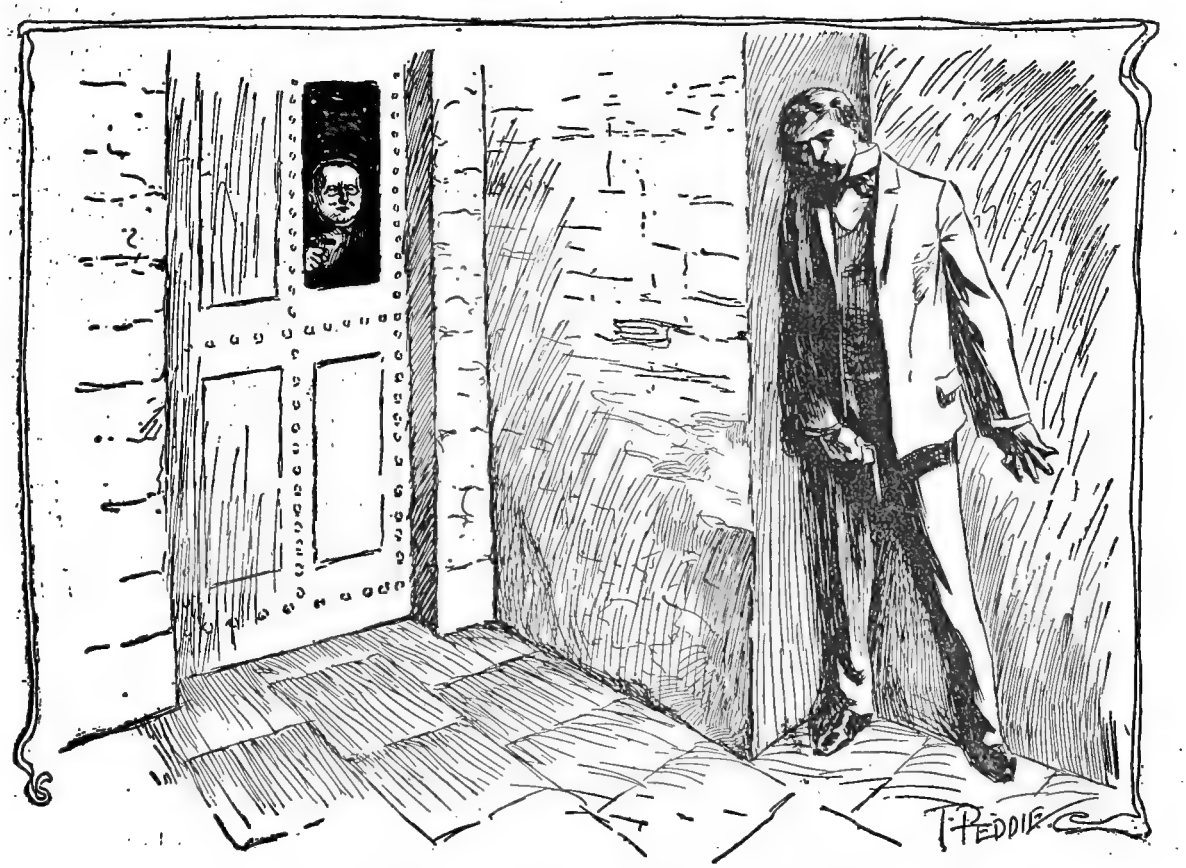
"Lady Dering is very hysterical," she murmured; "you will endeavour not to excite her?"

Michael Brasher's black pupils rested for a second upon Judith Garland, as if to take an inventory of her personal qualities. But he accepted silently her tacit hint, and drew close to Lady Dering's couch with a gentle stride and much gravity.

"I—I have a slight clue to report to your ladyship," he said; "not a great deal, but hopeful, so far as it goes. It may ultimately get us on the track of poor little Sir Brian."

Judith had stooped as though to poke the fire; she started almost imperceptibly and turned to hear the better. The Inspector had pulled out his fat note-book and referred to a page.

"You know, my lady," he pursued, "that for long enough, in adition to your own private detectives from London, we had a Scotland Yarder on the job. It's a remarkable thing, but no sooner does their hue and cry die down, than there develops a clue that would have been worth hundreds had we only stumbled upon it two months back."



At last there was a click at the door, and Geddes guessed that the panel had been opened. (*See next week's instalment.*)

You won't forget to get a new reader, will you?

Digitized by Google

Stella Dering sat up to listen, her fingers lacing themselves feverishly. "Yes, yes," she gasped, "what is it—what have you ascertained? Be quick, oh, be quick; you said it was hopeful."

Mr. Brasher assented. "So far as it carries us," he allowed, "but no more. This is it: Early on the morning of the day that Sir Brian was missed, a teamster from a distant farm, going to Derby with a load of turnips, noticed a man sitting in a hedgerow and feeding a child from a bag of biscuits. The child was pretty and genteel, its hair was fair, and its eyes, the teamster thought, blue. He distinctly heard it say, 'I do want to go home to mother.'"

Judith rose. "Upon my word, Inspector," she observed, "I cannot compliment you on your clue. Nor should I advise Lady Dering to build upon it."

Michael Brasher regarded her coolly and proceeded with his relation. "The teamster," he continued, "had a stone in his boot and had stopped to get it out. While thus engaged he also heard the child ask for a drink, and then add, 'Waters always brings me my milk when I wake.'"

Stella Dering fell on her knees at the feet of the Inspector. "It is my boy," he cried: "Waters was his nursery-maid. Take me to him, oh, take me to him! He asked for me, my little loving child. He may be hungry and thirsty now; let me go to him; it is killing me to think of it."

Brasher coughed and loosened his collar about his burly throat. Judith had hurried to soothe the distracted Lady Dering—her own face was blanched and her heart beating wildly.

"I can't tell you the rest, my lady," protested the Inspector, with rough kindness, "if you fluster yourself so. Not that there is much to tell. It's needed all this time for that idiot of a teamster to mention his experience to someone who was sufficiently smart to see that it might have a bearing on the disappearance of Sir Brian. Of course, the scent's cold, but I've circulated the description of the man—who was a thin, dark, shabby fellow, according to my teamster. The child was badly dressed in patched garments, but that was only to be expected, after our finding Sir Brian's nightgown in the Black Pool. It showed that his abductor was on the watch against any simple forms of identification."

Mr. Brasher closed his note-book and put it away. "The most irritating part of the business is that the ass of a teamster thinks he saw the same man in Wyresdale a day or two ago, but can't be certain. You must not be too sanguine, encouraging as it is to happen on a clue of any sort."

Stella Dering covered her face. "I can't bear the suspense," she moaned; "it's horrible, horrible!" She began to laugh. "How ridiculous," she cried; "I'm his mother and can't go to him. I will go to him; he wants me—do you understand?" Her laughter became a shrill scream, and she commenced to tremble. Judith rang the bell.

"You must leave us, Mr. Brasher," she said coldly; "Lady Dering is subject to these attacks."

Brasher bowed and went to the door. A maid met him, responding to the bell; Judith gave a rapid order, and the Inspector was piloted downstairs, through the hall, and ushered out into the grey September morning.

With a stolid official gait, Michael Brasher bent his course to the police depôt off the High Street. At Caleb Forester's shop he paused and walked in. Connie was behind the counter—a melancholy sentinel.

"Father is having his breakfast," she told her visitor; "he got up late. Do you want to see him?"

(To be continued.)

An Australian Marvel.

A discovery which was made a few years ago in Australia by an eminent scientist, Mr. Charles Forde, is now gradually revolutionising the old methods of dealing with liver and kidney ailments and disorders of the digestive system. After overcoming apparently insurmountable difficulties, he succeeded in obtaining a purely vegetable substance which has the peculiar property of acting on the human system in exactly the same way as nature's animal substance, bile. After much careful study he combined this substance with some eight other vegetable ingredients, and then concentrated the product so obtained until a suitable dose could be compressed into the space offered by a small bean. This medicine, made up in the form of a "bean for the bile," soon became widely known as "Bile Beans." Its effect on long-standing cases of indigestion, loss of appetite, weakness, nervous debility, palpitation, headache, constipation, piles, and female ailments and irregularities, is so wonderfully satisfactory that in Australia at the present time Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness is not only a household term, but is synonymous with the best home medicine known. For some time now, laboratories have been open in England, and already the power of this medicine has been so well proved that the public confidence in it is daily increasing. No less than 250,000 doses are taken daily in the provinces alone—a fact which of itself is adequate proof of the excellence of this medicine as a household remedy. Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness are not only a certain cure for the disorders mentioned above, but will be found invaluable in all cases of dizziness, bad breath, rheumatism, the weakening effects of influenza, and the numerous ailments which always attend a bad condition of the blood and digestive organs. For female ailments and irregularities they are a perfect boon. They are sold by all chemists at thirteenpence halfpenny and two shillings and ninepence per box. Should you be in ill-health and in doubt whether or not Bile Beans are suitable to your case, you may write, giving full particulars of your condition, to the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119 London Wall, London, E.C., and you will be honestly answered, free of charge, whether or not Bile Beans have ever cured a case similar to your own. In order to allow all to test Bile Beans without being put to any expense, the proprietors will forward to all who write for same a free sample. The only conditions are that a penny stamp shall be enclosed to pay postage, and the name of this paper mentioned.

SONGS COPIED

Legible as print, 5d. page; transposed correctly, 6d. page.

Mrs. CONYERS,

Morchard Bishop, Devon.

Recommended by the Marchioness of Waterford, Lady Arthur Hill, Miss Ellen Terry, etc.

Try for our guinea postcard competition.

Digitized by Google

Short Stories That . . . . . Make You Laugh.

We devote every week space in *Short Stories* to witty, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a Stereoscope to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case, the source MUST be stated. Attempts must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, September 23rd. Postcards only, please. The prize of £1 1s. has been awarded this week to S. Chorlton, 227 Spa Road, Bolton, whose contribution is denoted by a star thus.*

JOBSON: "I have a claim against the Government. What lawyer would you advise me to retain?" Friend: "It doesn't matter whom you select, as long as he's young."

STUDENT under examination in physics. "What planets were known to the ancients?" "Well, sir, there were Venus and Jupiter, and"—after a pause—"I think the earth, but I'm not quite certain."

HE: "Get you a real sealskin? Really, my dear, you are asking too much." She: "Yes, that is so. This makes the third time I have asked you, when once ought to have been enough."

TYRO: "Well, now that you have heard my voice what do you think of it?" Teacher: "Wait, my dear sir, till I have had you bound over to keep the peace, and I shall be pleased to tell you."

AT a harvest home in Berkshire a dinner was given to the labourers on the farm. Opposite to one of the guests was a dish of green peas, which he took possession of, and with his knife, "shot" the entire contents on to his plate. One of his neighbours, who had watched the appropriation of the vegetables very carefully, picked up the pepper-box, screwed off the top, and emptied the whole of the pepper on to the peas, saying, "There, Bill, them what has the peas has the pepper."

IN a certain regiment at Aldershot, whilst falling in for commanding officer's parade, the colour-sergeant, who was an Irishman, proceeded to call the roll of his company prior to the officer inspecting it. Having done so, Pat, casting his eyes up and down the ranks, noticed a blank space in the supernumerary rank. Marching up to the officer and saluting, Pat exclaimed: "One N.C.O. absent, sorr." "Who is it?" inquired the officer. Pat then called the roll of N.C.O.'s and, having found them all present except himself, turned to the officer and smiling, said, "Shure, it's meshelf that is abshent, sorr."

* AN African millionaire recently invited to his Scotch shooting a party of friends whose familiarity with the gun was not excessive. He met his guests after they had been out for an hour or two, and asked them what sport they had had. "Oh, we have shot twenty brace," was the reply. "Twenty brace is not much," he said, "considering that I was assured that this was the best shooting in Scotland." "Well," was the answer, "we didn't exactly shoot anything, but Larkins, the gamekeeper, did." He met his friends again an hour or two later, and asked them how they had got on. "Oh, we have shot nothing further," he was told. "How is that? Didn't Larkins shoot anything?" "No, but one of our party shot Larkins," was the response.

GRIMSBY: "So you are going to make a pianist of your son? Has he an ear for music?" Flimsby: "I don't know anything about his ear, but see what a head of hair he's got."

"WHY don't you go to our old restaurant any more?" "I left my overcoat there." "Well is that any reason why you should keep away?" "Ah, but I took a better one with me."

"ISABEL, I told you particularly not to tell Blanche that secret, and you went right off and told her." "Well, it's all your own fault, Eleanor; you put it into my head by telling me not to tell her."

"DOES your wife do much fancy work?" "Fancy work? She won't even let a porous plaster come into the house without crocheting a border round it, and running a yellow ribbon through the holes."

"WHO's this man who has grown so suddenly rich in your neighbourhood?" "Oh, that's Skayte, an ignorant sort of a fellow." "And the man who's bankrupt?" "That's Mazzles, the eminent authority on finance."

"TOMMY, how did you get all the back of your neck sunburnt?" "Pulling weeds in the garden." "But your hair is all wet, my son." "That's perspiration." "Your vest is wrong side out, too." "Put it on that way a-purpose." "And how does it happen, Tommy, dear, that you have got Jacky Howard's trousers on?" Tommy (after a long pause): "Mother, I cannot tell a lie! I've been a-swimming!"

A FATHER and mother, with six children, paid a visit to Margate recently. Wishing to spend a few days there they set about looking for lodgings. At length they came to a "Furnished room to let" notice. "Oh, yes," said the landlady, in answer to the father's inquiry, "it's here the room is to let, but there is only one bed in it." "Oh, that's all right," replied the father, "we are used to roughing it, the wife and children can sleep on the floor."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES enjoyed nothing so much as a clever retort, even if it happened to be at his own expense. One day, at an entertainment, he was seated near the refreshment table, and observed a little girl looking with longing eyes at the good things. With his invariable fondness for children he said, kindly: "Are you hungry, little girl?" "Yes, sir," was the reply: "Then why don't you take a sandwich?" "Because I haven't any fork." "Fingers were made before forks," said the doctor smilingly. The little girl looked up at him and replied to his delight: "Not my fingers."

A GOOD story comes from South Africa by the last mail, says a correspondent. It is related that after a recent engagement an Irish sergeant and a squad of men were told off to bury the dead, amongst whom were some of the enemy. As they were about to lift the body of a Boer the supposed corpse raised its head and assured the burial party that it was not dead. "Not dead, is it?" said the sergeant. "Well, I've got me orders to bury yez, and, be-dad, it's buried yez shall be. Put him in, bhoys." Just at that moment the Colonel rode up, and, seeing what was going on, said: "Sergeant, what the devil do you mean by burying that man? He's not dead." "So he says," replied the sergeant, "but, colonel, ye knows that these Boers is sich blaggar-rdly liars that, be my sowl, yez can't belave a wor-rd they says."

Digitized by Google

Write now

SIMPLY A POST-CARD WILL DO AND RECEIVE BY RETURN

H. SAMUEL'S

BEAUTIFUL VOLUME.

The Finest and most Reliable Guide in existence to the Purchase of Watches, Diamonds, Bracelets, Cutlery, Plate, Silver-Ware, etc. 200 PAGES, 3,000 ENGRAVINGS. IT MEANS A SAVING OF ONE HALF TO YOU.

VALUABLE BONUS GIFTS TO BUYERS.

Ten Lists to Select from.

FREE TO ALL!

AN EXAMPLE OF H. SAMUEL'S GRAND VALUE.

H. SAMUEL'S

'ACME' LADIES' WATCH

25/-

Solid Silver Cases, Fine ¾-Plate Movement, Extra Jewelled, Fitted with Dust and Damp Proof Cap, and with H. SAMUEL'S latest improvements, **not to be found in watches of any other make.**

Warranted for 7 Years.
One Month's Free Trial.

ANOTHER REMARKABLE BARGAIN.

YOUR - - - TABLE - - - FURNISHED

With Elegance, Taste, and Economy.

1/6 THE SET OF THREE.

H. SAMUEL'S Celebrated

CUTLERY PARCEL.

53 Articles sent to any address for 23/6

WARRANTED TO WEAR EQUAL TO REAL SILVER THROUGHOUT.

53 ARTICLES 23/6

6 TABLE KNIVES	1 PAIR SUGAR TONGS
6 TABLE FORKS	2 MUSTARD SPOONS
6 DESSERT KNIVES	6 EGG SPOONS
6 DESSERT SPOONS	1 BREAD KNIFE
2 TABLE SPOONS	1 BUTTER DISH AND KNIFE
6 DESSERT FORKS	
6 TEA SPOONS	
2 SALT SPOONS	
1 SUGAR SPOON	

On further payment of 22/- the complete set of 53 articles will be sent. H. SAMUEL thus gives **56** articles of highest value for **23/6.**

WRITE FOR CATALOGUE TO-DAY.

H. SAMUEL (Dept. 29), MARKET STREET, MANCHESTER.

How To Win a Fortune

Ambition, purpose, perseverance, and common sense are qualities essential to money-making, but there is a subtle influence which underlies them all, and which is bounded only by the limits of the world. It is **Personal Magnetism.** Money comes easily to those who possess Personal Magnetism. They never lack for friends and influence. They accomplish exactly what they start out to do. You can become personally magnetic if you will.

Our Free Book

will tell you the quickest and best way. It will teach you how to get full control of yourself, and make the most of your natural abilities; how to influence and control others and make them act and think as you wish them to. It fully explains the hidden secrets of Personal Magnetism, Hypnotism, Magnetic Healing, etc., and shows how all diseases and bad habits may be quickly cured without the aid of drugs or medicines.

If you send for our free book to-day you will have taken one step towards the goal of success. If you follow its directions you will never want for a position; on the contrary, you will be sought after, courted, and admired; you will be able to win love and friendship; to advance along the highway of life with the firm tread of a master and attain a position where you can dictate and make the world acknowledge your inherent genius. The book we speak of we will send you **absolutely free.** Address a penny postal-card to

NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE,
Dept. VA23, ROCHESTER, N.Y., U.S.A.

Mr. GEO. R. SIMS'

HAIR RENEWER

Called by him "TATCHO"

(Romany: "GENUINE," "GOOD," "TRUE.")

And why, pray, is the successful poet, playwright, and journalist an eminent authority on hair restorer? Eager for an explanation a *Daily Mail* representative sought out Mr. Sims. . . .

Now Mr. G. R. Sims, as many people know, is one of the busiest men in the kingdom, but hastily affixing his signature to a letter, he looked up and extended a characteristically cordial welcome. Then he said, "I will explain. I found that I was rapidly going bald. Not seriously, you understand, but the thinning out was sufficiently marked to set me thinking out a remedy. I went to two specialists, both of whom cheerfully assured me that I should be absolutely bald in two years.

"Then I discovered the preparation which is now placed upon the market. I found that I had hit upon a remedy capable of working wonders. Look at my hair now, isn't that convincing evidence of the value of my preparation?

"Ladies confirm my good opinion of it as a dressing for daily use. Mrs. Brown-Potter, whose beautiful hair is the admiration of the entire lady world, writes that she uses nothing but 'Tatcho.' There is nothing to prevent every woman from making her hair silken in texture and bountiful in volume, for she can obtain a bottle of 'Tatcho' now in every town or even village."

In order that the public may be able to test the superlative value of Mr. George R. Sims' discovery, the Company is issuing large 4/6 size test bottles post free for **1/10,** under plain cover, one of which may be had on application. Please cut off the corner of this advertisement where marked and send with name and address, legibly written to the—

GEO. R. SIMS CO.,
81c Great Queen Street,
LONDON, W.C.

Mr. Geo. R. SIMS'
HAIR RENEWER
4/6 Large Bottle 1/10
POST FREE
COUPON S.S., Sept. 21, 1901.

Digitized by Google

THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

I HAVE another pleasant surprise in store for you. By the greatest of good luck I have managed to secure a splendid serial story by Mr. Henry T. Johnson—perhaps the most enthralling that that extremely popular writer has ever written. You are doubtless all familiar with Mr. Johnson's work. He has written some of the best sensational novels of the past decade. Among the many stories that he has written are "The Pride of the Ring," "Found Guilty," and "Cruce Vincit."

Popular as these stories have been, I venture to think that

"DEAD TO THE WORLD,"

which is the novel he has written for *Short Stories*, will eclipse them all in fascinating interest. The story will begin in a few weeks, and before it starts I shall have an opportunity of telling you more about it.

❦

WEEK by week the adventures of Hazel Harlow increase in interest. This week the famous actress is in Belfast. Next week, Dublin will be the scene of her adventures.

❦

ADVICE ON LOVE AND OTHER MATTERS.

(Replies to Correspondents.)

"PHYLLIS" has a young man that she does not love, but says if she parts with him she is bound to flirt about, as flirting is a weak point with her, and asks me to give her advice on the matter? Shame on you, "Phyllis"! It is girls like you who do more harm in the world than enough. The only advice I can give you is to stop flirting. As to its being a weak point with you, that is mere nonsense. How can girls expect men to respect and look up to them if they behave in so senseless a manner? Try and control yourself; be as happy and bright as you like, but know where to draw the line between flirting and fun.

"THELMA" says that she never manages to keep a friend for long, on account of her curt manner, which she feels sure arises mainly from the fear of being thought bold or forward. She knows a man, and both he and she are lonely, and yet they do not seem to get any further in their friendship. What can she do to make herself agreeable, and would it be forward on her part if she stopped and spoke to him when they were alone? Try and cultivate a pleasant manner, "Thelma." People always are apt to take offence at an abrupt way of speaking. I see no reason why you should not stop and speak to him; perhaps he feels awkward and, too, is reserved. Men like girls to take an interest in their pursuits, so try and find out what his are, and you will find it very easy to get on with him.

"ALINE" is nervous, and blushes painfully when addressed by a gentleman. There is one young fellow whom she really cares for, but when he speaks to her she behaves in a manner which she knows to be foolish. What is she to do? You are not often enough in the company of the other sex, "Aline." If you were to go out more your nervousness would soon wear off. Make a determined effort to keep up a conversation with him, and do not refuse to dance with him again.

FIVE
CRISP £5 NOTES
will be given away
BY
SHORT STORIES.
❦
For full particulars, see
NEXT WEEK'S NUMBER.
❦
Most Interesting
Competition ever
Devised.

"ADA" is very miserable and lonely, and wants to know what she can do to become friends again with a girl whom she is very fond of indeed. Four months ago they quarrelled, and ever since have behaved as mere acquaintances when they meet. Why do you hesitate to tell her how lonely you feel, "Ada"? She would surely be glad enough to be friends again. If you do not like to speak to her about it, write a nice letter, and she is sure to answer it. A friendship of years' standing is not a thing to be lightly broken. I am glad you like *Short Stories*.

"EVA" asks whether a girl sixteen years of age is too young to keep company with a young man two years older, and are four nights a week too often to go out with him? Sixteen is not very old, "Eva," but if you know your own mind and are old for your age I should not say it is too young. As to going out four nights a week, it would depend on what your circumstances are. If you are independent and live at home, and your duties do not interfere, I do not think *seven* times a week too often; but if you are in service you may think yourself lucky if you are allowed out twice a week. I am glad you like *Short Stories*.

❦

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

I AM open to consider original stories of any length from 1,500 to 6,000 words. The character of stories required may be best ascertained by a careful reading of the contents of the paper. All MSS. are dealt with promptly, and every effort is made to return rejected stories which are accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes. At the same time, I cannot hold myself responsible for MSS. accidentally lost. Communications of this kind should be addressed The Editor, *Short Stories*, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

SHORT STORIES
ADVERTISEMENT RATES

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0 10 0
Double ,, ,, ,,	1 0 0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10 0 0
Half-page ,, ,, ,,	5 0 0
Quarter-page ,, ,,	2 10 0
Eighth-page ,, ,,	1 5 0

All spaces above one-eighth of a page are charged at per page rate.

Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, September 24th, if intended for the issue on sale October 8th, and dated October 12th. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly," Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Printed by HORACE COX, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

CHIVERS'

DELICIOUS. WHOLESOME. REFRESHING.

Flavoured with Ripe Fruit Juices.

THE LANCET: "An excellent Jelly, possessing a flavour of quite a natural character."

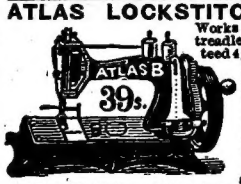
SISTER EVA, Authoress of "Scenes in the Life of a Nurse": "Your Jellies are quite the nicest I have tasted. They deserve to be more widely used in the sick-room."

PROF. GOODFELLOW: "Perfectly pure and of the highest excellence."

FREE SAMPLE on receipt of post-card. CHIVERS & SONS Limited, Fruit Growers, Histon, Cambs.

JELLIES.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.



Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality **39/-** and size to any machine To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO., 184s High St., Camden Town, London, N.W.; 63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

DRUNKENNESS

CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 8), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

NOSE A. LEES RAY (S.S. Dept.), South Castle St., Liverpool, is a Specialist on Ugly and Red Noses. Send stamp for particulars of his Patent Scientific Nose Improver. Medically-approved Red Nose Cure, 3/9. Pamphlet, "Cause and Prevention," 1/-. Machines for Prominent Ears. Blackhead Cure 1/9.

Do Go

to your chemist or store for a bottle of

"ANTEXEMA."

The price is 1/1½, or post free for 1/3 from the Antexema Co., 83 Castle Road, London, N.W. It is the most wonderful Skin Cure ever discovered. It at once allays itching, and cures every form of

ECZEMA.

A treatise on "Skin Troubles" is included.

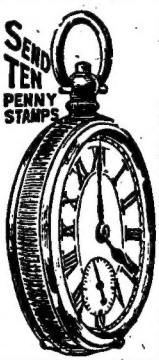
ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.,** Sole Proprietors, 66 Pinsbury Pavement, London.

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."



A WATCH FREE.

SOLID SILVER.

LADY'S or GENT'S SIZE.

We guarantee the TREVIT WATCH to be solid Silver and of SOUND WORKMANSHIP, a Treasure to one who wishes to know the correct time. It is catalogued at 35s., but to introduce our price list and to gain your recommendation we will send you one FREE if you take advantage of our offer, which we will send. If you want one write to us without delay and send 10 penny stamps for one of our solid Curb Pattern Alberts to wear with the watch. After you receive the FAMOUS TREVIT WATCH we expect you to show it with our catalogue to your friends, and tell them how and from whom you obtained it, and to explain that it is warranted for two years.

TREVIT WATCH STORES (Dept. 15), 21 Mount Pleasant, Clerkenwell, W.C.

The only Efficacious Substitute for Cod Liver Oil.

Devonshire Cream

(Really Genuine).

In patent air-tight tins. ½lb., 1/4; 1lb., 2/4; 2lb., 4/-: including tin & postage.

MRS. CONYERS,

Morchard Bishop,

DEVON.

"NO BETTER FOOD."

Dr. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., &c.

Fry's

Pure Concentrated

Cocoa,

300 GOLD MEDALS, ETC.

The MEDICAL PRESS, including the "LANCET," "BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL," and "MEDICAL ANNUAL," testifies to its

ABSOLUTE PURITY.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.—Sold only in tins with gilt tops.

Do your Dyeing at home.

It costs little, and you get quicker and better results than by sending to dyers, if you use

New Style Old Style

MAYPOLE SOAP DYES

which are simple to handle, and Dye **BLACK or ANY COLOUR** Fast, Permanent, and Beautiful.

Any Colour, 4d. a Cake. Black 6d.

Send for Free Booklet, "The Perfection of Home Dyeing," to the Maypole Co., Ltd., 17 Cumming Street, London, N.

Digitized by Google

FOR ALL FRYING & COOKING.

HUGON'S "Atora" BEEF SUET

OF ALL GROCERS & PROVISION DEALERS.

FOR PLUM PUDDINGS, MINCE MEAT, PIE CRUST & CAKES.

Sample 1lb. Box and Book of Recipes sent for 8½d. in stamps.

HUGON & Co Ltd. PENDLETON MANCHESTER.

LADIES SAY THAT THE "Mene" SANITARY TOWELS ARE SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHER MAKES FOR CLEANLINESS, COMFORT & ECONOMY.

May be obtained from all Underclothing Houses and Chemists.

2 doz. No. 1 at 1/-; 1 doz. No. 2 at 1/-; 1 doz. No. 3 at 1/6; Post Free.

A FREE SAMPLE To any Lady naming this Paper.

MISS HAYNES, 55 Fann St., LONDON, E.C.

DELICIOUS: MILD-CURED: GENUINE

YORKSHIRE HAMS.

Trade Mark: Registered.

10lbs. to 14 lbs. at 1/- per lb; 21lbs. at 11½d per lb; 28 lbs. at 11d per lb.

All in prime condition—Warranted.

ALSO YORKSHIRE BACON.

BANKS & Co. DEALERS IN FARM HOUSE PRODUCE YORK

Just like China!

REDFORD'S STARCH GLOSS

A CLEVER IDEA. There is no difficulty in getting a gloss just like china on linen if you go the right way about it. The right and the easy way is to use REDFORD'S CHINA GLOSS. You do not have to add this to the starch but simply rub it on before ironing and you get a beautifully polished surface. There is no sticking and no trouble. A 2d. box will last you for months, and it will be sent post free for 1d postal order. Sample packet free on receipt of Post Card.

S.S. REDFORD & SON, OXFORD STREET. LIVERPOOL.

"EVERY ONE TO HIS TASTE."

DUNLOP TYRES

suit every taste. The only tyre offering a choice of attachment.

Ask to see our

Trade Mark.

WIRED OR BEADED EDGES.

£3 3s. per pair.

Guaranteed for thirteen months. Of all cycle agents.

The Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Company Limited,

Para Mills, Aston Cross, Birmingham.

SPECIAL OFFER TO READERS OF "SHORT STORIES."

THE PATENT SELF-CLOSING BRACELET.

NEVER SLIPS IN WHATEVER POSITION PLACED.

DELIGHTFULLY COMFORTABLE AND FLEXIBLE.

SPECIALLY SUITABLE FOR PRESENTS AS THEY WILL FIT ANY WRIST.

GUARANTEED SOLID 18-carat ROLLED GOLD.

PRICE: Plain, 10s. each, or Set with Gems, from 15s. each.

HOW TO PAY.—Send 2s. 6d. deposit with your promise to pay 2s. 6d. per month for three months. Deposit willingly refunded if you are not more than pleased. Catalogues and Price Lists of Bargains post free. Any kind of old-fashioned Jewellery taken in exchange.

H. C. DEAN & CO., JEWELLERS, SHEFFIELD.

FOREST CITY CATSUP.

PREPARED FROM FINE RIPE TOMATOES.

A DELICIOUS APPETISER.

Sole Agent for United Kingdom—

A. E. CHICK, 8 Savage Gardens, LONDON.

Digitized by Google